

1 はい、魔装少女です

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これは
ゾンビ
ですか？



ファンタジア文庫

Kore wa Zombie Desu ka? Volume 1: Yes, I'm a Masou Shoujo

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HARUNA

PUN ON
"XANTHOPE
TEEN
REACTION."

KORE WA
ZOMBIE
DESUKA?

AYUMU: HARUNA,
LOOK INTO THE
CAMERA AND
INTRODUCE YOURSELF-

HARUNA: HEY! AYUMU,
WHAT IS THIS
SORCERY?! YOU
TRYING TO STEAL MY
MAGIC AGAIN?!

AYUMU: NAH, HANDYCAMS
DON'T COME WITH THAT
FUNCTION SO DON'T WORRY.
COME ON, INTRODUCE
YOURSELF.

HARUNA: ... I'M THE GENIUS
BISHOUJO DEMON BARONESS
MASOU SHOUJO HARUNA-CHAN!

AYUMU: A GOOD
SELF-INTRODUCTION THAT
MAKES IT ALL TOO CLEAR HOW
STRANGE YOU CAN BE. SO,
WANT TO STRIPP?

HARUNA: DON'T PULL ON MY
CLOTHES! WHAT'S WITH THIS
XANTHOPE TEEN REACTION?!

AYUMU: HEY, I JUST BOUGHT
THAT HANDYCAM!



AYUMI: YOU
LOOK OVER
HERE A BIT
AND INTRODUCE
YOURSELF PLEASE.

YOU:

AYUMI: MY NAME
IS BUCKWOOD
HELLSCYTHE. I'M
THE
NECROMANCER WHO
TURNED OMNICHAN INTO
A ZOMBIE. TEEHEE~

YOU:

AYUMI: ALRIGHT,
AND THEN SHOW
US A SMILE.

YOU: AYUMI DON'T
BOTHR ME.



AYUMI: ALRIGHT, IT'S SERA'S TURN.

SERA: I UNDERSTAND. MY NAME IS SERAPHIM.

AYUMI: ...

AYUMI: WHAT COLOR UNDERWEAR YOU WEARING?

SERA: TODAY IT'S LEMON COLORED... WHY DO YOU ASK?

AYUMI: AND THERE YOU HAVE IT, THE VAMPIRE NINJA HAD ANSWERS ANY QUESTION YOU ASK HER.

SERA: BY THE WAY, I WANTED TO TEST THE SHARPNESS OF MY BLADE ON YOU, SO DO YOU HAVE SOME TIME?

AYUMI: AH, LATER... BUT TEST ON ME!!

← SERA

DAI SENSEI →

DAI-SENSEI: MY MY~ WHAT IS THAT THERE?

AYUMI: PLEASE INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

DAI-SENSEI: UM, WELL, I'M THE HOMEROOM TEACHER FOR THE REFRAIN YEAR RISING CLASS AT MATSURI MAGICAL ACADEMY. I HATE MEN WHO PUT KATSUOBUSHI* ON THEIR TOFU--.

AYUMI: I PUT KATSUOBUSHI ON MY TOFU THOUGH.

DAI-SENSEI: MY MY~ IF THAT'S TRUE, MIND IF I BREAK YOUR NOSE A BIT?

AYUMI: YOU'RE GOING TO GO THAT FAR!!



AYUMU: ALRIGHT... LET'S FIX THIS HANDYCAM...

ORITO: AYUMU, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THAT OUTFIT... IT'S DISGUSTING IN A CUTE WAY.

AYUMU: THE CORRECT PHRASE IS CUTE IN A DISGUSTING WAY. DON'T TURN IT AROUND LIKE THAT!

ORITO: AHAHAHA! AIKAWA, PLEASE COME TO SCHOOL LIKE THAT! IT WOULD BE HILARIOUS!

AYUMU: ORITO... ARE YOU REALLY ALRIGHT WITH THOSE BEING YOUR LAST WORDS?

ORITO: SHALL I FIX IT?

AYUMU: YAH! YOU CAN FIX AYUMU'S IDIOT BRAIN WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!

AYUMU: UGH... JUST LEAVE ME ALONE...

Prologue – From Henceforth, You Have Become a Masou Shoujo!¹ You Should Be Honored!

*A play on the words “mahou shoujo.” “Sou” is written with the kanji that means “clothes,” so “masou shoujo” means pretty much “magical clothing girl.”

* プロローグ *

* 「あんたは今、現時点を*
もって魔装少女だつ! 光

始まります。





Part 1

It was the summer after my first year of high school. Every year,

there's a dispute over when summer actually starts, but I don't care about that. Isn't it fine to just say that when it's hot, it's summer?

The rainy season had passed, and I looked up at the clear-weathered skies, ignoring the droning of the teacher which I probably should have been listening to and fully enjoying the sluggishness of the school day.

Ahh, it's so boring. Boring to a magnificent degree. Of course, to me, boredom was a supreme luxury.

I collapsed limply onto the top of my desk. We were in the middle of math class, but I didn't give a damn. There was no helping it, you know? I hated the sunlight.

I don't think I hate being on the window side of the classroom that much. Honestly, being second from the back on the window side is a pretty good position to be in.

Ugh... and after this precious boring time had finally arrived, the weather had to go and rain... I mean sun... on my parade.

If school were at night, I wouldn't be this bothered. The heat didn't matter to me.

It was the sunlight I hated. The sunlight.

Well, there's no point in sitting here idly and complaining about it. Thank God for curtains. To get rid of that terrible sunlight striking my skin, I leaned my chair back, and poked the guy sleeping behind me with my mechanical pencil.

"Hey. Close the curtains."

But, he just continued on sleeping and showed no signs of waking up. Maybe I should make sure you never wake up. Don't screw with me, asshole².

Dammit, my mind is going hazy. I thinned my eyes and glared at that annoying sunlight.

If only there were no sunlight, there would be nothing on this Earth

that could frighten me.

Well then, since my brains are going to be like quickly-melting shaved ice when I wake up, let me just be frank with you now.

I'm a zombie.

Ah, also, a masou shoujo.

Alright. That was my once-in-a-lifetime coming out. Alright, I'm going to sleep. Please let me sleep.

... And please, will someone shut the...

Prologue: Part 2

I remember that it was around seven twelve in the evening.

That day, like always, I loitered around until the sun parted ways, and left the school through the gate come nightfall. You might ask why I had to wait until nightfall, but what other choice did I have? If I tried to walk outside in the sun, I would collapse.

After all, I may look like this, but I'm a zombie.

It took around five minutes to walk home from school. Of course, I didn't have anyone I liked to walk home with, so I took this walk alone.

It should have only taken me five minutes to get home, but that day I felt like taking a detour.

There was a graveyard near my house. It was quite a big place, and naturally a very ordinary zombie like me loved hanging out there.

As if trying to oppose the heat that came in the last third of June, the wind that blew there was refreshing. There were no stars to be seen in the sky; only the moonlight shined down.

I shuffled comfortably into the center portion of the graveyard, and, perhaps disrespectfully, sat myself down on top of a tombstone. The coolness of the stone under me was irresistibly pleasant.

Feeling like gazing at the moon, I stuffed my cheeks with the onigiri³ I had just bought. It was a moment of pure bliss. After I had become a zombie, I often found myself feeling awfully hungry.

I might appear lonely, but being able to survive by yourself is a sign of harmony, I think.

Wasting time alone. To me, this was the ideal way of living life.

Well, and in that moment of pure bliss...

My mood was improving greatly. With all my strength, I threw the now empty plastic bottle of green tea into the air. The plastic bottle went so high that it looked like a grain of flour.

Looking up into the night sky in anticipation of when the bottle would fall, I saw something else flash with a momentary burst of light.

A bird? No no, it was too big to be a bird. And there were two things. No matter how I looked at it, it was obviously not my plastic bottle.

I began to run from that place. It wasn't because I was panicking or I was in a hurry. I had just calmly calculated the trajectory of the falling object, determined which areas would be safe, and was now moving over there.

BAAAAM!! I heard a huge commotion, and a hole formed in the place I had been just a few moments before.

The gravel ground rolled violently upwards, and a cloud of sand and pebbles rained down on the tombstone. I see, this is what they mean by "raining earth and sand"⁴.

While I swore to God I would never litter again, against my better judgment I returned to the crater that had just formed. I mean, anybody would be curious, right? It had nothing to do with the fact that I was a zombie.

"Ow ow ow ow...."

A girl, in cosplay I had never seen other than at doujinshi markets, was there rubbing her back. From a quick estimate, her height seemed to be around 145 centimeters⁵.

Underneath the girl was a completely exhausted black bear wearing a Japanese school boy's uniform. Also, for some strange reason, there was a chainsaw on the ground next to me.

When I picked up the chainsaw, it was lighter than I would have

expected. It might be because I was a zombie that it felt so light... eh, this wasn't the time to be thinking about that.

"Hey." I spoke up to the girl who was rubbing her back. Her chestnut colored hair looked like it would be pleasant to touch and hung down to her shoulders. She messed with her hair a bit and glared at me.

Her eyes left quite an impression, as they were as big as a cat's. I probably wouldn't mind being looked at affectionately by those adorable eyes, but my attention was diverted to the area above them.

If you ask why, it's because out of the top of her head sprung a tuft of hair that is commonly called an "ahoge."

"You alright?"

"Ah!!"

For some reason, the girl opened her mouth wide and pointed in my direction. Did she find something strange? Could she have realized that I was a zombie?

"My masou renki!⁶ Give it back! Quickly! Hurry! Now, quickly, immediately, without delay, without a moment's hesitation, right away, right now, in a flash, straight away, right this minute, give it back!"

Her footsteps thumping strongly on the gravel ground beneath us, she rapidly approached me.

"Wait. Wait wait. What's a masou renki?"

Every time her feet thumped on the gravel in an incredibly menacing fashion, the ahoge sticking out of her head swayed from side to side. At any rate, what was with her getup? Her embarrassing cosplay outfit suddenly vanished, and before my eyes her white skin was exposed... s-she was naked?

"It's what you're holding! If I don't have that, I can't use attack magic!"

She seemed to be too angry to even notice that her clothing had vanished.

At any rate, what cute smallish breasts she had. This was great. Mother, I really feel alive at this moment... even though I'm dead.

"This?"

I pointed to the chainsaw in my hand, and she tried to snatch it away.

The minute her pale hands came in contact with the chainsaw, static electricity-like sparks flared up and she wasn't able to touch it.

"Ow! W-What?!"

No matter how many times she tried, she couldn't touch the chainsaw. Every time, sparks flew off the chainsaw. When she tried to grip it forcefully, the sparks changed to a strong electric shock.

"Hey, but leaving that aside, do you have a change of clothes?"

"Hueh?"

My words seemed to take a bit of time to register. After around two seconds, far from only her ears and cheeks, but her entire face and then her entire body flushed a brilliant red.

"Don't look at me! You hentai! This ero special...!"

"Ero special... don't make it sound like Warsman's special attack."⁷

"Shut up!"

She forcefully sent a kick into my face, and ran off to hide in the shadow of a nearby tombstone.

But I didn't even have enough time to think about whether I should follow her.

The three meter tall bear wearing a school boy's uniform bent his

knees and jumped into the air, kicking up a cloud of gravel. It was the bear that had fallen down together with the girl. And even though I'm a zombie, I was freaked out, you know? It was so sudden after all.

I recall that in less than a second, that bear came down from high in the sky and leap kicked me. He was incredibly swift.

But this isn't the time or place to be sitting here in admiration. The bear kicked me hard in the cheek with his padded foot and sent me flying headfirst into a tombstone.

... Oh God, I'm glad I'm a zombie. It doesn't hurt at all. For example, it wouldn't hurt no matter what angle you bent my little toe to. After all, I'm dead.

I stood up and faced the bear. The chainsaw had flown out of my hand from that one attack and had landed a close by. When the naked girl timidly tried to touch the chainsaw, as expected it sent off sparks and rejected her.

"Let me just ask you one thing. What exactly is this bear thing?"

Looking at the girl out of the corner of my eye, my gaze then returned to the bear. I don't know where the bear had learned it, but the bear took up a Chinese martial arts stance.

"That's the evil high school girl Kumacchi! Run away! If you don't, you're going to get killed!"

Well that was surprising. Somehow, this bear was... a high school girl? He's wearing a boy's uniform though... well also, he's a student? Alright, let's say I believe that for a second...

"It doesn't look evil though."

The bear in front of me had big round eyes like a stuffed animal. His fur was also very pretty, so I thought he was pretty cute. If he couldn't move, I wouldn't be able to tell the difference between him and a high-quality stuffed animal.

"Idiot! You're really an idiot! Can't you see how strong he is?! This

is why this world's humans are so... ugh!"

The girl continued talking in a shocked fashion. You're the one who can't see how strong I am, you know.

The weak-looking stuffed animal-like cute bear opened his mouth. Baring his fangs, he faced the moon and howled. It was the cry of a beast.

In the face of that earth-shattering howl, both I and the girl stiffened. The bear let out a breath of what looked like purple, noxious smoke. Well, it was rude of me to call you cute, then.

I thinned my eyes and tightened my hands lightly into fists.

The bear took a deep breath and crouched. Blowing out the same kind of purple smoke he had before, he kicked the ground and quickly closed the distance between us.

Backhand chop. I caught it with a backhand attack of my own. It was a splendid attack with a lot of weight behind it. Next, a roundhouse kick, followed by a triple kick that rose from below, and a body blow with his shoulder. These attacks came swiftly and flowed one into the other... how the hell am I supposed to avoid that? This is impossible.

Quickly blown away by these attacks, I slammed into the tombstone the girl was hiding under, smashing it into pieces.

"Uwaah!" went the girl. It wasn't me; I don't feel pain after all.

"Why are you coming over here?! Don't look, I said! You Erero Gunsou!8 Go die!"

Her red face became even redder and she began to beat on me. What a fresh attitude.

"Would a schoolboy's uniform work?"

"As if I know! Huh? What are you talking about?"

She inclined her neck. Her huge round eyes blinked twice.

“For you to change into.”

Saying that, I stood up and kicked off of the gravel floor.

I extended a hand, aiming for his neck. The minute I reached my target, his furry padded hand twined around mine.

In the next moment, my legs were swept out from under me and my back hit the gravel.

This bear didn't have any fingers but still could throw me, couldn't he? Also, he elbowed me in the face while I lay there collapsed. This attack was once again with an amazing amount of force, and made a loud sound as if he had just struck me with an iron ball. I was sure that there was now a head-shaped hole in the ground.

When I tried to strike his fist, he quickly jumped away, once again taking up a Chinese martial arts stance with his hands stretched out horizontally, waiting for my next move.

I stood up slowly and brushed off the gravel, once again putting up my fists.

“Don't you understand?! The likes of you could never defeat a Megalo! Run away quickly!”

I heard her heckling me from the shade of the tombstone... just shut up for a second.

There was a single tree that overlooked the graveyard, as if watching over it. The tree swayed in the wind, and its leaves rustled. To me, the sound seemed almost like a cheer.

Once again, I closed the distance between me and the bear. I approached him straight on this time, with the intention of grabbing onto his face.

Once again, the bear's hand grabbed onto my zombie arm. But this time the bear couldn't stop me. I grabbed onto his uniform sleeve and pulled the bear towards me, while the other hand grabbed onto his huge nose.

Then I took the howling bear's head with both hands and twisted. I heard a huge satisfying *Crack!*. The bear sent a line of drool flying into the air and spun around a number of times before stopping. Then, that three-meter tall bear fell onto the floor with a thud.

Have you heard of the idea that humans cannot use 100% of their strength?

The body can't tolerate it when you use 100% of your strength, so the brain deliberately locks up some of this power away. Sometimes, in great catastrophes, you can tap into this power. Like at a fire or something.

Well, my body can tolerate it. In fact, I wish my body could lock some of this strength away. I can put out not only 100% of my strength, but 120%. I mean, that's what I just did. And I can do even more.

I mean, I'm a zombie after all.

My muscles might protest, but I feel no pain. What's more, my body has definitely become sturdier and heals quickly. Granted, if I use too much strength, my arms might fly off or something in reaction.

While I was thinking about these things, I successfully disrobed the evil high school girl or whatever and handed the uniform to the naked girl.

The girl quickly snatched the huge uniform away from me.

"Look away!"

She angrily issued that one command, and I obeyed. I quickly turned around, and stood there while listening to the rustling sounds of her changing.

"So, what exactly was that bear thing?"

"I told you already, didn't I?! It was the evil demon baron Kumacchi!"

... Well, that name sure is different.

“But also, to think that a B-class Megalo could be wiped out in one strike...”

“Well, one strike or whatever, if you twist something’s neck around once it’ll die, right? I don’t know a single person who wouldn’t die from something like that.”

Of course, that’s only from personal experience.

It seemed that she had finished changing, and I felt a pull on my shirt.

When I turned around, I saw the girl wrapped around in the huge baggy uniform that was dragging on the floor and had its sleeves rolled up a large number of times.

She was glaring at me and her mouth was twisted into a frown. Her ahoge, as if it was receiving a signal from somewhere, violently swayed from side to side.

“Pick up my masou renki.”

It was right there, but she probably still couldn’t touch it. I listened to her desire and collected the weapon. Even though I was touching it, I didn’t get shocked.

“Geez. Why exactly am I being rejected by this thing?”

Even if she asks me that, all I can do is cock my neck in puzzlement.

“Alright... take me to your house. I have to make a phone call.”

“Phone? If you need a phone... I have one here.”

I took out my cell phone from my pants pocket. I had smashed hard into that tombstone earlier, but it seemed that my cell phone hadn’t broken.

“What kind of sorcery is that?”

Seeing the black cell phone, she took a step back and seemed to fall into a defensive stance. I don’t think she knew what a cell phone

was. When I held it out at her, she dodged. Heh, amusing.

“It’s just a phone.”

“Really? If you’re lying to me, you’re going to become like Kumacchi over there.”

She pointed at the collapsed bear. The bear turned into sparkling white particles and rose in the wind, soon disintegrating... I wouldn’t want to become like that.

“Yeah yeah.” I responded nonchalantly, and began to explain to her how to use the phone. Quite unexpectedly, she sincerely listened to my explanation and nodded.

Whether she understood how to use the phone or not, with the quickness of a master of Hyakunin Isshu⁹, she snatched the phone away from me and dialed a number.

Riiiiing. Riiiiing. Riiiiing.

“Ah, is this Dai-sensei? It’s me. Haruna from the refrain year, rising class!”

It seemed she had gotten a hold of who she wanted.

From what she had said about “humans in this world” before, she was probably from another world. I guess phone signals could traverse worlds... and for some reason, the words “refrain year, rising class” had a bad ring to them.

“Eh? Ah, I haven’t found it yet... sorry about that. But there’s something else. I’m being rejected by Mystletainn.”

It seemed that the chainsaw had the fancy name of Mystletainn.

“Ah, yeah. It just shoots sparks at me. Yeah. My magic power dried up? I see... wait! There’s no way a human in this world could have that kind of magical power!”

Oh? For some reason, she seemed surprised at something. She began to pace around the area with a hand on her chin, and

appeared to be thinking.

“I see. Certainly, that can be the only explanation. I understand. For now, I’ll do what I can in this world. As for how I’m going to get home... alright. Excuse me. Sorry for taking up your time. Yes. Alright, until later.”

I couldn’t really follow the logic of the conversation, but if you’re done with my phone, please give it back. When I held out my hand, she roughly thrust the phone back into my hands.

“You, you stole my magical power, didn’t you?”

She glared at me with upturned eyes. Why exactly is she looking at me like that?

“I have no idea what you’re talking about. Sorry.”

“Who exactly are you? Dai-sensei told me that you’d have to have an impossible amount of magical power to be able to steal the magical power from me, the genius bishoujo demon baroness Haruna-chan!”

So now you’re a demon baroness? Is she obsessed with demon barons or something?

I have no idea about this magical power or whatever she’s talking about. But, I knew one person who was well-informed about this kind of thing. That person was probably at my house right now, leisurely watching comedies on TV.

Well, what should I do? The only two people who knew that I was a zombie were myself and the person who made me this way. Well, I guess it probably is fine if I told it to this “genius bishoujo demon baroness Haruna-chan” too.

“Hurry up and speak! Who are you?! Could it be, you’re one of this world’s wizards?! Y-You thinking of stabbing me to death or something?!”

... What kind of terrible wizards do you know?

“I’m a zombie.”

“Hueh?”

“Just a walking corpse. I’m dead.”

“The undead! Undead demon ba-... no, you’re not a demon baron, that’s for sure.”

She covered up her words mid-sentence. Does everything have to be a demon baron with you?!

“I see... hmm, I see. If you’re dead, it won’t matter if you’re impaled with a sword...”

Why exactly did she want to impale me with a sword that much? Hm? Wait a second. Could it be that she knew that I was stabbed to death?

Lately, there have been a series of bizarre serial murders in this town. I also got involved with that and died... and well, the reason I’m a zombie now is because the murderer stabbed me with a sword. And even if she knew about these murders, would she know that the murder weapon was a sword?

Perhaps... the one who killed me was... her? Her attitude is just too strange...

Exactly what does she know?

“Hey, are you connected to the serial murders?”

“... You’re going to take responsibility for your actions.”

She completely ignored me. Well, whatever. I’ll ask her later.

“What responsibility?”

“My mission as a masou shoujo in this disgusting world was to look for artifacts. Also, to defeat the Megalo that appeared.”

“Ahh, a mahou shoujo. I thought that’s what you might have been.”

“Huh? I’m a masou shoujo! Don’t lump me together with those clichés!”

“I don’t know the difference. So, what are Megalo? Things like that bear?”

“Yes. That frightening thing before.”

“Why are you fighting with things like that?”

Even for a zombie like me, it was a tough opponent. For this cheeky little bishoujo, it was probably a matter of life or death.

“Megalo are little insects that are trying to destroy my world. So if we leave even one alive, there is no future for masou shoujo like me. And that’s why I’m a warrior. Hmph, pretty amazing, aren’t I?”

“I see, so they’re your natural enemies. If they want to destroy your world, why exactly are they appearing in this one?”

“Well, let me just ask you, do you really want to have a war at your own home?”

Well, don’t go and fight at someone else’s doorstep then! Although, if she’s getting rid of things that are also threats to humans, then I guess I’m grateful.

“Anyways, I can’t fight in this condition, so you do it!”

“Huh?”

“From henceforth, you have become a masou shoujo! You should be honored!”

In a flash, she pointed at me with her index finger. What, was this an official decision or something?

“Wait wait. Those, umm... mahou... I mean masou shoujo... I’m a guy, not a girl. You should stop while you’re ahead.”

“As if I care! I told you to just do it!”

Eh, is she deaf or something? Now I know what they mean when they say “I’d like to see her parents’ faces.”¹⁰

“Please reconsider it. This really is an important point. It’s not like it’s that easy to-“

“And in that time... I’m super ultra mega reluctant but... you’re going to allow me to stay at your house.”

She muttered with a frustrated look on her face, and averted her gaze.

... Give me a break. What’s going to happen to my lonely, boring days if someone as noisy as this came over to stay? Just thinking about it frightened me.

“... You, what’s your name?”

“It’s Ayumu. Aikawa Ayumu... hey but seriously, just think about it a bit mo-“

“... Ayumu. I see. It’s Ayumu.”

How deaf can one person be? I get the feeling that I knew exactly what the inventor of the phrase “in one ear and out the other” must have felt. Even if I told her she couldn’t come over, anything I said that she didn’t want to hear would just not register, right?

And also... this situation was my fault in the first place...?

... Well, whatever. If it really is my fault, then I have no choice but to at least let her stay over. Yes. Life is about accepting things. So let’s not hesitate.

“I understand. I’ll... be a masou shoujo or whatever.”

She was probably waiting to hear my surrender. Her ahoge bounced up and down in a lively fashion and she nodded with a triumphant expression.

“If you’ve decided that, let’s begin practicing being a masou shoujo right away!”

I watched her with my head held between my hands as she pumped her fist in the air, and began to walk with a spring in her step.

“But, I have one condition.”

“What? If it’s something strange, I’m going to kick you.”

“I want you to call me oniichan.”

Ahh, geez, she really did kick me hard. It was a high kick in the style of Mirko Cro Cop.¹¹

And well, that was how I was forced to become a masou shoujo.

Even though I’m a guy. And, well...

I’m also a zombie.

END PROLOGUE

**Chapter 1 – My Likes: Hiken, Tsubame
Gaeshi¹². My Special Skills: Hiken,
Tsubame Gaeshi. My Hobbies: Hiken,
Tsubame Gaeshi.**



第一話

**「好きなものは秘剣、燕返し。
* 特技は秘剣、燕返し。
* 趣味は秘剣、燕返しです」***

あ、予告し忘れた。
はあっ？ やり直し？ 知るかっ！
勝手に想像させとけよなっ！

メガロ退治に汚らしい世界へやってきたのはいいけど、
あたしはふざけた男に魔力を奪われてしまった。

最悪ってもんじゃない。殴り飛ばしてやりたかったけど、
あたしは我慢して蹴り飛ばすことにした。

でも、まさかB級メガロのクマッチを一撃で倒すなんて
……もしかしたら、彼が悪魔男爵なのかも。かもかも。



Part 1

When I woke up, math class had already ended and the next class had begun. Or rather, the next class seemed to have ended as well.

Glancing to my left, I saw the curtains fluttering in the wind; maybe it was because of the heat, but someone had opened the window. I wasn't sure who it was, but nice curtains. As these thoughts lazily wafted through my head, I heard the bell chime.

Next is... oh, it's lunchtime, isn't it? Bento time, bento time.

I quickly took out my handmade bento box. To tell you the truth, the one who made this bento was none other than Haruna-chan. Indeed, the genius bishoujo demon baroness.

"I'm very confident in my fried eggs!" she had said.

And like that, she had energetically made me my lunch. I smiled. And with my best zombie smile I opened the bento box cover. Soon, my zombie smile turned into bewilderment.

I've been set up. That's what this situation felt like.

"Give me a break..."

I mumbled while hugging my head. Plain white rice would have been better. Just plain white rice with nothing but a bit of fish flour sprinkled on top.

The contents of my bento box were a sea of yellow.

"I'm very confident in my fried eggs!" she had said.

That's all fine and good. But, you're a bit too confident, aren't you? There's nothing here *except* fried eggs.

What was the point of these little green jagged leafy dividers you set up? They're not supposed to be there just as decoration, as if you're fencing off the fried eggs like you would animals on a farm.

"Aikawa. How unusual for you to have a normal-looking bento..."

A lone guy appeared before me. His name was Orito. His hair was

dyed brown and pointed, and he wore glasses. He was a dime-a-dozen, normal, annoying classmate.

His height and weight were average, and so were his looks. There was nothing worth noting about this high school boy. Maybe he realized this himself as well, but he had a habit of always grooming his trademark pointed hair. Ever since our nursery days, we've been stuck with each other, and one way or another this annoying guy always tagged along with me.

“Uwaah...”

Upon seeing my bento, Orito seemed seriously drawn aback.

Please, quit it with those eyes full of pity as if you were looking at a dying animal.

“As I thought, that idiot went overboard. This isn't funny...”

Shaking his head, Orito pulled up a chair from one of the nearby desks, and opened his incredibly normal bento box on top of my desk.

“I love fried eggs.”

Making excuses like that, I prepared to eat a bite... but there were no chopsticks.

Hey hey, what a basic mistake you made, Ms. Demon Baroness. Luckily, I was a convenience store maniac, and I had a good supply of disposable chopsticks.

As I stood up, I heard Orito call out to me. “Hey, Aikawa.”

“Hm? What?”

“How long has it been? Aikawa, it's been a while since you've told me to eat at my own seat.”

Well, that's because no matter how many times I tell you that, you end up eating at my seat anyways, so I gave up on trying.

“Alright, then eat at your own seat. I want to be alone. Stay away from me.”

“Haha, but this is fine.”

For some reason, Orito seemed satisfied and smiled. Ugh, he’s seriously annoying.

I retrieved a set of disposable chopsticks from the unlocked personal storage compartments in the back of the class, and prepared to do battle with the yellow monster in front of me.

Scary. I’ve done battle with a wide array of living things since becoming a zombie, but this is much scarier than any of them. Something smelled fishy here. I stuck a chopstick into the fried egg pile from the edge. Taking deep breaths, I sent a mouthful of the stuff into my mouth, and resolutely took a bite.

“Mmphh!”

Without thinking, I let a strange sound escape from me.

Delicious! Seriously delicious! It was like an explosion of flavor in my mouth¹³ of flavor! Was she a world class chef or something?! I’ve never had a fried egg this good before!

But...

But I seriously didn’t need a whole bento box worth of this. I suddenly wanted just as much white rice to go along with it. Agh, I can feel tears coming on. For various reasons. I guess this is what they mean when they say even zombies can cry¹⁴. Alright, let’s try something then.

“Hey, Orito. This is some unbelievable fried egg here. Just a bit is fine, so exchange a bit of that white rice¹⁵ with me.”

“Huh? You should have put rice in there to begin with then. It’s because some weird idiot made it...”

Even as he complained about it, he ended up exchanging with me.

At the explosion of flavor the fried egg set off in his mouth, Orito soon widened his eyes.

What the hell is this?! he seemed to want to say as he looked at me. He stood up from his desk.

“Hey! Aikawa’s fried egg is amazing! He seems to be trading it for white rice right now!”

Come one, Orito-kun. Don’t make it a big deal. Zombie’s are timid creatures that prefer to live alone.

Upon hearing that, a number of people came up to me. Well, there’s no helping it at this point. There’s plenty of fried egg. So why not share it?

That’s what I thought at first, but “Aikawa’s home’s ultimate fried egg” was a great roaring success, and soon my completely yellow bento had turned into a bento of nothing but white rice. Here and there the rice was sprinkled with fish flour, depending on what family it had come from.

Certainly, I had said it before. Just plain white rice with nothing but a bit of fish flour sprinkled on top would have been better. But when that became reality, it made me unexpectedly sad.

What would you feel if the greatest fried egg of this century was completely turned into white rice?

But it’s not like I could yell at people for doing what they were doing.

The girls in the class were all praising how delicious it was and smiling at me. I couldn’t say anything.

In games or in movies, occasionally zombies could read the atmosphere, right?

Well, I can do that too.

Part 2

The afternoon classes also safely came to a close. I slept through them though.

That afternoon sun was criminal. I seriously was about to die. Afterwards, all that was left to do was to wait for the sun to completely set and set off for home.

I looked at the school grounds illuminated under the setting sun. Like children playing at the park, the track and field club was running around the orange track. Everyone was smiling as if they were doing something really fun. As I watched the athletic girls with their firm bodies, I understood all too well what the inventor of bloomers must have felt.

Right now, there were barely any students left in the classroom, and as usual it seemed that Orito and I would be the last to leave. The other students, all enjoying their youth, had already left the room while pleasantly chatting with each other.

Orito also seemed ready to go home, standing up and swinging his backpack onto his back, yawning heavily.

“Aikawa. Now that I think about it, you’ve been going home pretty late nowadays. Have you been doing something at school?”

“Sleeping.”

“Even though you’ve slept that much already?”

Orito laughed loudly while hitting me on the back. That wasn’t really sleeping, it was me collapsing after a battle with the sun... but I guess those two things are not that different.

“Your house is close by, so you’ll probably be alright. But there have been a lot of murders lately, right? So be careful.”

Unexpectedly, he was worried about me. I suddenly laughed through my nose. Certainly, there have been frequent murders recently. And there was probably only one murderer.

And that person is also the person who killed me. At this point, I was on the side of the people who have been killed.

“Well, I want to come face to face with the murderer though.”

“Oh right, now that you mention that, Aikawa. My little sister’s friend had an encounter with this whole serial murder business and wants to meet you. Her name is Kyouko, do you know her?”

Whaa? There was a survivor? Hey hey. Weren’t there no survivors from these murder cases? Well, I guess I’m a survivor, though.

“I don’t know the name. What kind of girl is she?”

“She’s the same age as my little sister, so she’s 14.¹⁶ She’s a bit tall for a junior high school student, but her face looks young and her chest is huge. She’s many times cuter than my sister.”

“I haven’t heard of her. So, what does this Kyouko-chan want with me?”

“You might not know her, Aikawa, but she knows you. In other words, she fell for you at first sight!”

He grinned. Like an idiot. The eyes in the middle of those glasses were the eyes of a hentai.

“That’s pretty dubious logic if that’s the only evidence you have.”

“How many times has she asked about you...? She’s definitely in love with you! I’m just being chivalrous and I want to let this poor girl who has already lost both her parents the chance to meet the boy she likes. I guess you don’t understand that. It’s fine if you just meet with her, so please.”

What an annoying person. Putting his hands together like that and looking embarrassed makes me really want to throw him twenty meters away. Well, whatever. This was a clue. I had found a clue

pertaining to the serial murders.

“That’s completely alright. I’m interested in meeting this girl.”

“Aikawa... you’re a lolicon, aren’t you?”

“Completely wrong. I’m not interested in her in *that* way. Don’t tell me you haven’t tried to make a move on her though.”

“Hey, Aikawa, don’t lump me in with you. I like adult women.”

“Well, I might like flat-chested girls, but I’m not a lolicon.”

“Alright. Alright. Don’t take it so seriously. You lolicon.”

“Fine. Tell me your most sought after feature, and I’ll make fun of it to high heaven.”

“Anyways. She talks about you a lot, and she wants to meet you even today if possible.”

“I understand. If tomorrow evening is fine, let me go and meet her then.”

“Speaking of going¹⁷, I haven’t gone over to your house lately. In the olden days we used to go over to each other’s houses all the time.”

I can’t remember a single time when I actually asked him to come over... hey hey, don’t start remembering weird things.

“After so long, can I come by and visit?”

Now just look. Look at what’s happened... ugh, this is bothersome. If you came over now, it would be extremely bothersome. Not just now; if you were to come over at any time in the future, it would be bothersome.

“You can’t. I mean... there are a lot of things to do at home. I’m pretty comfortable living by myself, but I’m really busy.”

Although, if he asked me what I’m so busy with, I really wouldn’t

have a convincing answer.

“Ah, I guess there’s nothing I can do about that then...”

Orito seemed sad and looked towards the windows. From outside, we could hear the voices of the club members who were out there sweating and having fun.

“Sorry. Do you want to go bowling instead? You probably can’t beat me though with me like I am now...”

I mean, I’m a zombie, right? Although, I kept that part in my head.

“Alright!! It’ll be a match with a manga volume as the prize, like we used to do! Let’s do it the day after tomorrow!”

Orito swung his arms around and the corner of his lips turned upwards into a smile. This person really liked to bowl.

We chatted nonsensically for a while longer, and Orito retired from the classroom one step in front of me. As I listened to the sound of his fading footsteps, I turned my gaze out the window.

The sky, tinged with the color of dusk... well, try as I might, I couldn’t figure out a way to finish that description. Things like this happened sometimes.

Ahh, but the weather really is nice. Almost like it was telling me to go eat shit and die. Damn sun, go down faster.

“Hm? What’s that?”

Thinking I saw a sparkling light, I suddenly heard a deafening sound, after which something broke through the window and burst into the classroom. I didn’t even have to get a good look at it to know what it was. It was a crayfish. A crayfish wearing a Japanese school boy’s uniform, just a bit larger than... geez, this one was huge!

“I felt the power of a masou shoujo here and came to see...”

The crayfish brushed off the shards of glass that had fallen onto his

uniform with his pincers, and restlessly looked around the room. And those big and round cute eyes finally settled on me.

“Masou... shoujo...?”

The crayfish tilted his head to the side, looking confused about the situation. It was a very human-seeming movement.

“Who are you? It’s rare to see a male masou shoujo. And also, your magical power is so weak. You, are you really a masou shoujo?”

“I’d like to deny it, but for the time being I am a masou shoujo.”

“... Well, that’s alright, I’m picking up quite a few signals in this area. I’ll go look somewhere else.”

What was it again? The general term for these things.

“Hm? One is headed this way... how lucky. I can kill two today.”

Ah right, they were called “Megalo.” That was the general term. I managed to remember. Good job, me.

And then, next to the curtain that was fluttering in the wind, she appeared.

She was wearing a t-shirt and one pair of striped panties. With a chainsaw in her hands, Haruna came through the open window.

With the evening athletic grounds in the background, her shirt and ahoge swayed in the wind. She looked both fantastic and comical.

“Ayumu! What are you doing?! Beat that Megalo black and blue!”

I have no idea what would count as “black and blue,” but more importantly, I had no idea why she had come looking like that.

“Bwahaha! My my, look at this! Looks like another failure! I’ll put my hopes into the remaining ones then... after I kill you both!”

The crayfish opened and closed his pincers as he laughed lightly. Who the hell are you supposed to be, Baltan?!¹⁸ Ah, no, the pincers

look different.

“Ayumu, do it quickly! H-Hey, what are you doing?! Don’t look over here!”

Haruna seemed openly irritated, and I did as she told me to do, facing the crayfish. Haruna was blushing, probably because it was pretty embarrassing having her panties showing like that. Well, if that’s the case, why the hell did you come here looking like that?

“Alright, but what about what’s going to happen to this classroom?”

“Hmph. You can fix everything. You’re a masou shoujo after all.”

“Alright, I’m good to go then. By the way, that’s a crayfish, right?”

“Yes, a double A class Megalo, Wizard Zarii.”

That thing was a wizard? I didn’t see it at all.

“Wait, that’s not it. The Atrocious Zarii, was it...?”

That sounds a bit more plausible. What the hell were you thinking at first?

“Bwahahaha! Well, let’s begin!”

All of a sudden, warm gusts of wind blew through the room with the crayfish at the center.

It didn’t seem like a huge amount of wind. Did the crayfish let loose an attack or something? It was a purplish, evilish wind that coiled around our bodies. When that happened, Haruna let out a small squeal and hugged her body. She was probably experiencing the same unpleasant feelings I was right now when the wind hit her.

“W-What is this...? This can’t be.”

“What’s wrong? You all right?”

“A.. yumu... what’s with this chilly feeling...?”

The crayfish took one step towards me. Haruna shut her eyes, and

raised her shoulders with a start.

“You, could it be... you’re scared?”

“D-Don’t screw with me! A-As if I would ever be afraid of a Megalo... that’s...”

Haruna’s words cut off. As if all her strength had left her, she plonked down onto the floor. Creases formed across her brow and she ground her teeth, trying to keep herself from shivering.

For now, I closed the distance between me and the crayfish, aiming for his neck like I had with the bear.

But, before I could grasp his neck, my hand from the wrist up fell to the floor. Blood dripped from the wound.

“Ho hoh? You’re pretty good despite your appearances... you male masou shoujo!”

Putting pressure on his eyes with his huge pincers, the crayfish laughed heartily.

“Ayumu!”

A cute yell echoed through the classroom. It’s completely understandable that Haruna would be worried for me. Blood was dripping from my severed wrist, and my hand was lying there on the floor. Agh, this is tough. Zarii-san really can move fast. He got in between me and his neck so easily. But in exchange, I had taken out one of his eyes.

“Damn, he took my right hand... I would have preferred it if he took my left hand instead...”

Not being able to use my dominant arm was a huge problem. The regular dripping of blood marked the passage of time, and Zarii-san and I both impatiently shuffled back and forth. Zarii-san was probably thinking the same thing I was thinking.

... There’s no crack in his defense. The first one to make a mistake would be the one who loses. What should I do?

“Ayumu! Quickly, transform into a masou shoujo!”

Haruna suddenly tossed me the chainsaw. Hey hey, if I try to pick that up I’m going to get cleaved into two. Try to read the atmosphere, dammit.

I leaped backwards and caught the chainsaw in my left hand. Of course, Zarii-san closed the distance between us and gave me a body blow. His pincers pierced my stomach, and I spat out a stream of blood.

I slouched, and Zarii sent a headbutt my way. A mountain of blood gushed from my nose and my back hit the blackboard. With all my strength, I sent a knee kick through the air, but Zarii’s elbow bore into my body.

Dammit, this crayfish... he’s too fast.

“Chant a spell!”

Haruna’s order echoed in my ears. No no, there was no time for that. Spells are pretty long things, right? And I had crammed them all into my head in one night.

The pincers hit me on the side, and sent me tumbling through the classroom, taking tables and chairs with me.

“The one thing I didn’t want to do was transform into a masou shoujo...”

But, there are no other options. This crayfish was strong. Damn strong. If I don’t transform into a masou shoujo, I probably wouldn’t be able to win.

Making my decision, I shouted. Zarii-san, please hold on just a second.

“Nomobuyo, woshi, hashitawa, dokeda, gunmiicha, dei, ribura!”

Alright, now what? First, my clothes tore, almost as if they were bursting open, and light began to gather where I was. At this point, my embarrassment had already reached the summit.

The light merged, and a cosplay-like outfit made of a material I still have yet to identify began to appear on my body. It was the same outfit Haruna had been wearing when we first happened to meet, and the bottom was of course composed of a skirt. If Haruna wore it her undoubtedly cute panties would be completely visible... so I didn't like this at all.

Power poured into my body. To the point where I myself was getting goosebumps. Well, it's also possible the goosebumps were a response to me being in this outfit.

But, geez. With this, things should work out. That's what I was thinking. Of course, I'm talking about the power of masou shoujo.

My transformation had definitely put Zarii on guard. He put up his pincered hands as if he was a boxer, and carefully watched my movements.

"Come on, Ayumu! Quickly... go quickly!"

She pointed at Zarii, and shouted while her ahoge jumped back and forth. Yeah yeah. I'm going, I'm going.

With my left hand, I brandished the chainsaw high in the air. Along with that, the moment Zarii's hands started to move, I threw a straight punch at him with my right arm that was missing its hand. Taking the opportunity, I kicked him and sent him flying into the hallway.

Zarii collapsed to the floor, leaning heavily on the wall for support, and I brought down the chainsaw on him. Perhaps it was the magic's effect, but the chainsaw glowed red and the blade began to turn of its own volition.

As expected, he guarded against the chainsaw. He skillfully interposed his pincers in between the chainsaw and his body. Like that, he threw the chainsaw off, and we once again entered into standoff mode, just a bit separated from each other.

"Bwahaha. You sure can take a beating. I've killed six masou shoujo up until now, but you're the most troublesome of them all. Also...

you're strange.”

Zarii made a sound as if he was laughing through his nose.

“Why, thank you. If you want to talk about strange, I believe both of us fit the bill.”

The atmosphere in the air sparkled with tension. It was the highest form of anxiety that came with life or death situations like this. Granted, I'm already dead.

In this narrow hallway, there was no choice but to attack straight on. No need for tactics here.

Zarii's right hand moved. He stuck it out in front of him.

And then, those huge pincers came flying at me.

“Uwaaah!!”

I was terrified. The pincers were detachable? Like a missile, it flew at me and I leapt to the side to dodge, when I realized it.

The moment I had let out my pitiful sounding shout, there was someone behind me that had let out a similarly pitiful sounding shout. When I twisted my neck around to look, I saw a single male at the top of the stairs on the other end of the hallway.

It was Orito.

Well, I suppose that Zarii had shown up not too long after Orito had left, so it wasn't impossible that Orito would come back to check on what all the commotion happening in the classroom was about.

And while I was thinking that, the pincer collided with my body. It felt like I had gotten hit by a truck. What a strong attack.

My body was lifted ridiculously easily into the air, and I was thrown to the other end of the hallway. Afterwards, the pincer returned to Zarii's body. If I hadn't transformed into a masou shoujo, my body would have probably been torn to shreds.

“Aikawa...”

Orito opened his eyes wide and stared at me. His arms and legs were shaking, and even if I told him to run away it's not like he would be able to move that quickly.

“What the hell are you wearing...? Is that supposed to be funny?”

Oh, well that was unexpected. I thought he would ask about the crayfish first. I understand why he might have questions for me when I'm dressed in this cosplay like this, but first and foremost there was the crayfish, right? The crayfish isn't something you would see in everyday life.

“Hurry and run away. You'll be killed.”

Perhaps he didn't hear my warning, but Orito stiffened like a doll. This isn't good... if he takes an attack, unlike me, he's really going to die, right? After all, he's not a zombie.

“Hey, Haruna! There's a civilian here! Help!”

I yelled to the bishoujo who was probably still in the classroom. Zarii's huge round eyes faced the direction of the classroom. As if I'd let him interfere!

Crushing the floor beneath me, I rapidly closed the distance between me and Zarii.

I went in with a flying kick, and waved my chainsaw around as its gears spun with a *vrmmmm*. It was all so Zarii didn't end up targeting Haruna. Trying to chase him into the middle of the hallway, I tackled him aggressively, and once again swung my chainsaw around.

Zarii leapt backwards like a shrimp would do, dodging the chainsaw blade.

“Haruna! Hurry up and help him!”

“Shut up. I got it, so stop ordering me around.”

As if she were trying to ward off the cold, Haruna came out of the classroom rubbing her arms.

Please, Haruna.

A backhand chop... or should I say a backpincer chop... pierced me in the side. I had been looking somewhere else, which admittedly was a bad excuse, but his attack might have crushed a few of my internal organs.

The crayfish smiled. This bastard thinks he's won, doesn't he? I grabbed the pincer, twisted hard, and pulled his large body down to the floor.

I straddled him and brought my chainsaw, glowing a ruby color, down on Zarii's neck.

"Not good enough!"

The crayfish did not only have two legs. A number of legs extended from under his school uniform and pierced my body. It didn't hurt, but how do I put it, it felt disgusting. I mean, they were twirling around in my body.

"Bwahahahaha! Die! Masou shoujo!"

"Sorry, but I'm already dead."

The chainsaw roared into the crayfish's neck. Zarii-san had thought he had killed me so he had momentarily let down his guard. That happened often with these things.

The crayfish's large round eyes, a feature peculiar to Megalo, opened wide in shock. Zarii-san pointed a trembling pincer in my direction. It seems like he was about to detach his claws and launch that fierce attack he had before.

But he was too slow.

I tossed away the crayfish's severed head. Losing his strength, Zarii-san's right pincer fell to the ground, lifeless. At that moment, the pincer that was supposed to be released in my direction... suddenly

discharged.

“Uwoohh.”

Letting loose a pitiful sounding yell, I stood up. Like a rocket, the pincer passed through my legs. Geez... I guess this was his last desperate attack.

Feeling relieved, I turned around. I saw Orito there.

He was still there?

Didn't I tell her to get them to safety? Did I say something wrong? Did she not hear me?

Maybe it was because I was a zombie, but I felt the blood drain from my face.

Before giving myself over to that disgusting sensation, I went into a spectacular low dive like a lifeguard. The last pincer that Zarii had released was headed straight for Orito.

Hey hey, if I weren't a masou shoujo right now I would have been wounded pretty badly by that pincer. If I weren't a zombie, I probably would have died. I unconsciously opened my mouth wide.

Did I reach it? Even if I only touched it a bit, that would be fine. Even if I could just divert its trajectory a bit, that would be fine.

I reached out with the chainsaw in my left hand as far as it would go, chasing the pincer as it went straight ahead, spurting sparkling particles out its backside.

Just a bit more. Just slightly farther. That's it. If I can just catch the end of it, that's fine... alright.

Dammit, this isn't going to work. I can't reach it at all!

I was left speechless. I held my breath, and twisted my wrist.

I had to throw it. There was only one chance. I didn't even want to think about whether I could actually throw the chainsaw properly

from this posture, but I was out of other options!

“And gooo!”

306%. Exceeding the limits of human strength, I threw the chainsaw with just a snap of my wrists.

Answering my prayers, the chainsaw deflected the pincer. The pincer changed its course and drilled into the wall of the hallway. Orito clumsily covered his body with his limbs as the concrete shards that had popped off the wall poured onto him.

With one breath, I exhaled all the unpleasant air that had lodged in my lungs. Geez, what the hell was Haruna doing?

“Hey, did you see a short girl around here?”

“Eh? Ahh, that super cute girl? She glared at me and asked me where the toilet was, and when I told her she went there without another word.”

Orito turned his gaze to the end of the hallway. In the direction of our classroom.

Ah, I see, if she needed to use the bathroom that’s fine. Whatever.

Wait, it is *not* fine! When she comes back I’m going to lecture her on why life is precious.

“What are you?”

Rubbing down his chest, Orito put on an unusually serious expression and looked at me.

Well, it’s not like I can hide it anymore. Geez.

“I already died. I’m just a normal zombie.”

“When you become a zombie, you have to wear clothes like that?”

It seemed that the first and foremost thing on Orito’s mind was this costume. That would be a pretty long story to tell though...

When I explained the situation from beginning to end, Haruna returned from the bathroom looking refreshed. She shook water droplets off both her hands.

“Ah, it’s over? Then...”

Isn’t she acting a bit too casually about all this? Haruna nonchalantly walked over here, and touched the hands she had just washed to Orito’s forehead. When she did that, Orito collapsed to the floor.

“H-Hey, what did you just do?”

“Memory manipulation. I can’t deal with this entire area by myself as I am now, so you do it.”

“If you could do that, tell me earlier! I had just explained everything to him.”

“As if I care! Just hurry up and do it!”

Geez. With Haruna’s difficult-to-understand instructions, in order to use this magic I was not used to, I pointed my chainsaw at the classroom. A red light extended from the chainsaw and enveloped the damaged classroom.

I had to do “something or other” to the “space-time something or other” within a certain area or something. Memory manipulation also seemed to make use of that principle.

... Let me just be frank, and say that I didn’t understand at all.

At least use technical terms, dammit. Don’t just say “space-time something or other.” And what’s more, it seems this magic couldn’t heal my body’s wounds, so my body was still in its worn-out state.

Well, I would return to normal with time. They say that often, right? Time heals all wounds.

Even though I didn’t really know what I was doing, I seemed to have pulled it off, and the classroom returned to the state it was in before Zarii-san had come in.

I see. This way, there were no more signs that a battle had happened here. It could be possible that masou shoujo have always been fighting with Megalo in places that I don't know about.

And then, by manipulating memories, in general those places wouldn't be found out. That's pretty convenient. As long as I could ignore this outfit, I would probably like being a masou shoujo.

Alright, next comes memory manipulation. Haruna had already seemed to have done it, but I couldn't help but being uneasy.

I pointed my chainsaw at Orito, sleeping soundly and collapsed in the hallway. Once again, I listened to a hard to understand explanation from Haruna, and manipulated his memories.

At the very least, I had to make sure he forgot about this costume.

Even if he remembered the crayfish, even if he remembered that I was a zombie, he had to forget about this costume.

Part 3

A short time after the crayfish's attack, I began walking home, trying to avoid being seen. If you ask why, it's because after I dispelled that cosplay, I became naked, right? And whether I went home in these clothes or completely naked, both would be equally terrible.

And what's more, next to me walked Haruna, who was only wearing a T-shirt and a pair of panties. And I was holding a chainsaw. There was absolutely a hundred percent chance people would think we were wackjobs. The minute we got spotted, we'd probably get reported.

We finally chose and began walking through a dark, quiet, narrow road. The road was too thin for even cars to pass through. If we could slip through this road, my house would be just ahead. Ugh, just now, through my embarrassment, my annoyance was reaching its peak.

Why did I have to end up wearing this costume? That question repeated itself a countless number of times in my head.

I spoke up to the girl next to me who was looking the other way, and who was also the source of all my problems.

"You, go back to the magic world."

"Huh? My world has a cool name, and it's Virie! Don't use any other words to describe it!"

"Fine. Fine, whatever, just stop it!"

Haruna had placed her thumb under my nose and rubbed it back and forth as if she had a pocket tissue she was trying to open. That burns! The area under my nose is burning!

"Anyways, go back to this Virie or whatever."

“Huh? There’s no way I can go back!”

She looked at me as if I had just asked something stupid, and her facial expression soured.

“Why?”

“You stole my magical power so I can’t go back! Don’t you understand that much?!”

No, I didn’t. Could it be that she intended to stay at my house forever?

... Give me a break.

“Isn’t there a way you can go back? I’ll help you.”

“Alright, give me back my magical power.”

“How?”

“As if I know! Just do it somehow!”

With that, Haruna turned the other way, leaving me rubbing my head.

Alright, well that’s my house right there... it’s around 50 or 60 tsubo¹⁹. I think. Well, something like that. It was just a normal two-story residence. Right now, there were only two people living in this house... whoops, I forgot about Haruna. Only three people, then.

Under the pretext of going on a honeymoon, my parents had been gone for around five years.

I could easily imagine how many laps they had already made around the world. My little brother had happily gone with them, but I was left here in Tokyo. After all, if I went with them I would have to be on a schedule that would be tougher than being on a tuna fishing boat.

Now, there was not even a shadow left of the peaceful lonely

existence I had enjoyed before. Well, even now, I should be able to take back some private time. I'll just believe that... so, with that, shall we enter?

I mean, Haruna had already gone in. Usually, you should wait for the master of the house to go in first, right?

Well, whatever. She definitely seemed to be embarrassed by her outfit, and we had walked the entire way here looking at the ground.

When I asked her why she showed up like that, her response was "Well, a Megalo showed up, so what else could I do?! Don't look at me!"

When I went inside, I dispelled the costume. Stark naked, I ascended the stairs. My room was on the second floor. And in case you're wondering, I had left the chainsaw in the entranceway.

The inside of my room was exceedingly simple. A bed, a dresser, a bookcase, a study desk, and a television. Even though I was a zombie, there was nothing worth pointing out in here. It was an uninteresting, exceedingly normal room.

I took a shirt, some trunks, and some jeans from a drawer in the dresser. Changing into normal clothes, I exited the room. So, where should I go? Of course, the living room. It was the gathering place of the family, after all.

There was a large square table in the living room along with a biggish plasma television. Today as well, I could hear the laughing voices from some variety program coming from the television.

In front of the television sat a single girl kneeling with a teacup in her hands. You probably could figure this out, but this was not Haruna.

Even though she was indoors, she was wearing a dress that would look appropriate on nobility, along with a Western-looking set of plate armor. Both her hands were equipped with gauntlets, and I had yet to see her with them off. It was an unbelievable outfit

considering the heat.

... Her clothes may have been strange, but they really suited her.

“Was everything alright today?”

I spoke up to the girl in the living room. She didn’t even move her neck, but, with only her eyes, confirmed my identity and gave me a single nod. Even in making that nod, she barely moved her chin.

And then her gaze returned right back to the television. Even as she watched the comedians in the variety program laughing ceaselessly, she didn’t even let out a chuckle.

Her peculiar features lay in her flowing, straight, long silver hair and her transparent blue eyes. They were deep eyes that almost sucked you in, almost as if there was a whole other universe within.

This girl’s name was Eucliwood Hellscythe, or Yuu for short.

Glancing at me one more time out of her peripheral vision, Yuu didn’t turn her body at all as she put her teacup on the square table. Using her right hand adorned with that flawless gauntlet, she picked up the black ball-point pen lying on the table, and using her left hand equipped with a similar work-of-art gauntlet, she tore out a sheet from the memo pad on the table.

She put her pen to the memo sheet. And then, she tapped twice with her pen. I believe that was a sign for me to look at the memo she was writing.

In round Gothic lettering, she wrote the following on the memo sheet:

Prepare dinner.

I didn’t even see her pen move. I was watching her straight on, but it always happened that during the span of a single blink, she would have finished writing what she needed to. No matter how long the sentence was.

“Oo, Yuu is hungry. Hey, onii-chan. Won’t you make something? Pretty

please?”

That was what was going through my head. Just reading what she wrote was just too lonely, right? I always imagined a cute Yuu talking to me when we interacted like this. Even though I've never heard her real voice.

“What do you want to eat?”

At my question, she tore off another memo sheet from the pad. Two taps with her pen.

Steven Segal. 20

That's not going to happen. I couldn't even translate that into cute-Yuu speaking in my head.

“You know, Yuu really wants to eat Steven-“ ugh no, that's no good. Absolutely impossible. I tried for a bit, but I really couldn't do it. I didn't want to make the Yuu in my head say something like that.

Shaking my head back and forth, I shook the inner-Yuu out of my mind.

Right then, Haruna appeared. She was wearing a similar outfit as before, but she had on a pair of jeans for which the legs had been rolled up many times. When exactly did she steal my jeans?

Haruna passed by my side, and settled into a cross-legged position to the right of Yuu, directly across from me, putting her elbow on the table and looking in Yuu's direction. Her gaze almost made it seem like she was admiring a rare animal.



Yuu seemed completely unaware of Haruna's existence, and didn't move at all even when being examined from top to bottom by Haruna. She quietly sipped her tea.

The situation was similar yesterday when I had brought Haruna home. Even when I introduced Haruna, her eyes didn't move to Haruna at all. Haruna also didn't try to speak with her, instead acting like she was at the zoo watching an unmoving koala bear.

Even when I asked her "Haruna, is something about Yuu bothering you?" she just responded curtly with "not really."

Even when I asked "Yuu, do you have any connections with masou shoujo?" she just completely ignored me.

As I thought, this just confirmed my philosophy that the best life is a lonely one.

"Ayumu, dinner's still not ready? I'm hungry."

I want meat.

Yeah yeah. Please allow me to make you dinner. Also, those two were complete polar opposites. That applied even to the way they sat; one was kneeling with her back straight and extended, while the other sat there slovenly and hunched over, cross-legged.

"Pork kimchi fine?"

"Yeah. That's fine."

Haruna showed me a smile. Her smile brightened up her countenance and was very cute, even if she didn't intend it to be. It would be nice if she could always look like this...

Wonderful.

"Really?! Yaaay!! I love you oniichan!" is how I translated that. Heh, she really is quite cute, isn't she?

Well, you're probably wondering about this girl, so let's talk a bit about Eucliwood-sama. Some of you have probably already guessed most of the situation, but just humor me and listen to my story anyways.

Why exactly was this strangely clothed girl in my house, when I

was the one who said that I prefer being lonely?

Let's talk while I prepare dinner for these two.

About that day.

Part 4

It was around a month before I met Haruna, and the date was May 26th. As 1am was rolling around, I decided to head to a convenience store. It wasn't as if I was looking to buy anything in particular. Rather, I was just looking for a diversion.

There, I saw a solitary girl quietly sitting in the convenience store's garage, in which not a single car was parked.

Up to this point, I was never really interested in the girls around me. When I looked at the girls in my class laughing and playing around, I never really got the impression that I wanted to be with these girls... I think I was too busy chasing dreams.

But that day, I met a dream-like girl.

The girl had sparkling silver hair that would make anyone jealous, and was wearing armor and gauntlets.

Of course, this was the first time I had seen a girl dressed like that. It wasn't something you would wear to go to a convenience store.

She exuded an aura of mystery and was extremely beautiful. I couldn't help but be drawn in like a bee is drawn to the scent of flowers.

Usually, there's no question that I would think that she was a weird person, and would take refuge in the convenience store while avoiding eye contact. But that night, I stopped right there in my tracks.

Because then and there, she had seized my heart.

Our eyes met. The girl fixed her gaze firmly on me.

She was just like a doll... that was the only way I could think of to describe her. She had graceful looks that I felt belonged in an anime

or manga. Even though she looked very young, perhaps because of her blue eyes, there was an air of elegance around her.

Making up my mind, I began to move towards her. For the first time in my life, I felt the urge to talk to a girl.

I remember that Orito had once told me something. “Girls are attracted to erratic behavior,” he had said.

.... Alright.

“Excuse me, do you believe in Mononoke Hime?”²¹

She turned her gaze away from me. It seemed that my first contact had failed.

Dammit... what should I do? This atmosphere is so uncomfortable now. What should I do... ah, umm... that's right! If I go from a round-off into a moonsault,²² that definitely should earn a high score!

I quickly put some distance between us, and took a deep breath. I took off into a run and did a cartwheel. Alright, that had good power behind it. With that kind of power...

When both legs touched the ground, I tucked into a somersault of two flips and one twist...

Krchh!

Aaaaaaarghhhhh!!! My ankle!!!! My round-off had failed.

I glanced at the girl.

I saw her shoulders shaking a bit, perhaps out of fear. Certainly, having someone you don't know doing such suspicious things in front of you might scare you enough to make you want to run away. I was an idiot for believing what Orito had said.

I covered my head with both hands. Ugh, the more I think about it, the more I realize how embarrassing that was.

As I was thinking that, the girl began to pull on my sleeve.

Her entire face showed no emotion when I removed her hand. She said not a single word, but just continued to stare at me. I couldn't help but think that my soul might be stolen away by those blue eyes.

Under the light flowing out from the convenience store, Yuu took a ballpoint pen and a notepad from out of her skirt pocket, and tore off a single sheet... and on that sheet, she wrote this:

That was funny.

I was completely caught off guard and couldn't respond. Wait, when her shoulders were shaking back then, that was laughter? Alright, let's try a gag that Orito had done the other day. I lifted both my arms up.

So, don't do it again.

What the hell. With nowhere to go, my hands found their way to my head, and I ruffled my hair.

Who are you?

Her expression didn't change, her gaze didn't change. But her eyes seemed firm. She was probably on her guard.

"Just a normal kind oniisan."

I will be the one to decide that.

"Quite right. Well, what kind of person do I look like then?"

Yuu took a bit of time to think about that question. She was motionless, as if her batteries had run out. When I tried to break the silence, she took out another memo sheet.

However I look at it, a suspicious idiot.

I burst into laughter. I guess that's true. No matter how you look at it, I was a suspicious idiot.

In the end, she never spoke, but her right hand was very chatty. We talked for quite some time.

I never expected that it would be so fun chatting with a cute girl like this. I liked being alone, but talking with a girl like this was not bad either.

Having met Yuu, I discovered that joy.

Now that I think about it, it was precisely from that first meeting with Yuu that I began to act warmly towards girls.

Cutting off the conversation at an appropriate point, I waved goodbye to Yuu and began to walk home.

Be careful.

Yuu didn't wave back, but just coolly swept her hair back.

Part 5

One corner away from my house, I stopped in my tracks. I looked up at the eerie, starless night sky, when suddenly something came into view.

A dark second-story window. Something was clinging to it.

What's that? As I cocked my neck to one side, I squinted. I felt an unpleasant sensation, as if all my hairs had stood up on end.

Hey hey... isn't that blood?

There were red marks stuck to the window, almost as if someone had thrown a tomato at it.

The series of scattered murders. Those words passed through my head.

A chill suddenly ran down my spine. Pushing down the inner voice that was telling me to run away, I took out my cell phone. For now, I should call an ambulance... or maybe the police?

My fingers shook, my heart thumped, and my throat was painfully dry.

Just as I was on the verge of pushing the call button, I heard it.

... That was definitely a human scream.

Right now, someone was being attacked in this house. Even if I called the police, it would take them a few minutes to get here. Looking around, I saw that there was nobody around here but me.

So... should I run the hell away? Or, should I try to help?

In times of hesitation like this, it's better to make the courageous decision.

Nervously, I approached the entranceway of this unknown house, my back stiffening and my breath catching in my throat.

The door was not locked, so I opened it and softly entered. If this weren't actually related to the serial murders, I would just be a normal criminal here. As I worried about the possibility of having made a mistake, I briskly walked through the dark, unlit hallway. Having come this far, I was finally able to return to my right mind.

What the hell am I doing here...?

It's not like I can save anyone, right? What did I plan to do if I came face to face with the criminal? Am I an idiot?

It's not like I'm going to make it in time. I was really asking for trouble.

As these thoughts ran through my head, my fear multiplied many times over.

Not good... this really is not good.

Desperately trying to gain control of my throbbing heart, my numbed legs began to move.

Without making a single sound, I began to run out of the house.

I paid careful attention to my hand on the wall, making sure I was silent.

Alright, if I can make it out the front door, I'll start yelling outside, and the criminal won't be able to do anything about that.

I softly turned the doorknob... huh?

I couldn't move. It wasn't like I was playing "Daruma-san ga Koronda"²³ or something. It also wasn't as if I was trembling in fear and couldn't move. It was as if time had stopped, and my body couldn't make the slightest movement anymore.

Gatan. I heard a sound, and my heart leapt into my throat. But I had been flawless. I can't recall having made any sound at all. At any

rate, I can't move.

Kin. I heard the sound of metal. Of course, I wasn't the one who had made that sound.

... Well, who exactly made that sound then?

I could feel the atmosphere behind me growing ominously cold.

... Please forgive me. I felt like my body was shrinking. And then, a sharp pain.

I had been impaled by something sharp. When I looked down, I saw that it was some kind of sword.

... It hurts. Breathing, my body, my head... it all hurts.

I felt a sharp pressure pushing on my back, and then the sword that had pierced me was withdrawn. Blood gushed out.

I lost all power in my body and slumped onto the ground. As my consciousness dimmed, the last thing I remember seeing was a long haired person who was carrying something long and thin in both hands.

And then...

"Don't die."

The minute those words sounded in my head, I woke up in a graveyard. That place I was fond of. And right in front of me was that strangely dressed girl... yes, Yuu.

"You... am I alive?"

Putting a hand on my chest, I felt a gaping wound. But, I felt no pain from it. All I could feel was a sensation as if something was being zipped up inside my body.

You're dead.

She wrote that cruel response on the memo pad.

“Did you do this?”

Were you the one who killed me? That’s what I was trying to ask, but...

Yes. I made you not die.

At any rate, it seems that she wasn’t the criminal, but rather had saved me. Certainly, if she were the criminal, she wouldn’t have a reason to keep me alive.

“Well, what? Did you turn me into a zombie or something? You a necromancer or something?”

Panicking in the face of these extremely preposterous events, my breath became ragged.

Yuu did not avoid my gaze at all, and gave me a strong, firm nod.

... Seriously?

“Hold on... hold on hold on... has the criminal realized that I’m alive? Could it be that the criminal is still looking for me? Give me a break... don’t tell me my life is still in danger...”

Completely panicking, my words became jumbled as I rambled on and on. At that sight, Yuu handed me a single memo sheet. On that sheet were written these words:

Don’t worry. I’m here with you.

Those deep sky blue eyes made me feel like I could rely on this person.

My life is also being targeted. So it’s best to not be alone.

So, that means, she doesn’t want to be together like this?

That thought went through my head, but I don’t think my savior would go so far as to say something that brutish. It’s obvious that it’s better to be together than to go home in fear.

There was still a lot I didn't understand and couldn't consent to, but I didn't have enough strength right now to pursue those topics.

After all, I was still suffering from the aftershocks of the fear I had when I was killed.

But, along with that fear, there was a feeling of uncertainty left in my heart.

Who was it? Who had killed me? I hadn't cared about this when I heard about it on the news, but now that these misfortunes had fallen onto me, I couldn't help thinking about it... I'll definitely find the killer.²⁴

And like that, I had become a zombie.

After that day, my everyday life took a turn for the supernatural.

On the negative side, I had to battle a bunch of bizarre things I had never seen before that came to my house aiming for Yuu's life.

On the positive side, girls more beautiful than I had ever seen began to show up at my doorstep, one after the other. Things that I had thought were "impossible" now were happening right here.

If something has any possibility of happening, then it will eventually happen.

I guess that the probability of this phenomenon occurring might have been greater than zero. And if the probability is greater than zero, then sometime, somewhere, it would happen. The probability of it happening was just low.

It was just that sometimes, the probability of these things happening around me became high... quite high.

Part 6

We all ate in the living room, sitting around the square table. On the table were two bowls filled to the brim with rice and miso soup. And of course, the large quantities of pork kimchi I had prepared were lined up. There was also a rice cooker and a pot next to me. I was expecting to have to deal with the surging waves of these ravenous two asking for seconds.

I had only made two people's worth of food because a convenience store bento was more than enough for me. Who dares to complain about a hamburger bento? If anyone laughs at convenience store bento, I'll unleash my zombie ultimate attack on him.

"Ayumu, seconds!"

Haruna energetically handed me her rice bowl. Next, Yuu also seemed to want seconds. Geez, you two are eating just a bit too much. Girls should be more wary about their weight and eat less.

"I'm surprised at how good the food is in this world at reviving my store of magical power! Mystletainn no longer rejects me anymore, so at this rate I might be able to return to being a masou shoujo soon! Maybe maybe!"

She dug into the pork kimchi with a smile. Every time she moved, the ahoge coming out of her head waved.

"Oh, by the way, the fried egg you made was delicious."

Smiling, I stroked Haruna's head.

"Ah, of course it was. Who the hell do you think I am?"

For some reason, when I stroked Haruna's head like this, she didn't object. At some point, Haruna realized that I had an almost-disgusting zombie smile on my face.

“What are you laughing about? Gross... die! Idiot!”

Blushing, she sent a storm of verbal abuse my way.

And at that time...

Bam! A dry sound echoed through the room, and I widened my eyes in surprise.

For some reason, Yuu had leaned forwards and smacked Haruna across her flushed cheeks. Haruna and I both stood dumbfounded at these sudden happenings.

And then, even though Yuu normally never picked up her pen while eating, she faced Haruna and thrust a memo in her direction.

Don't use those words lightly. = “Geez! Don't say bad things about oniichan!”

There was not a tremor in either of her eyebrows, but I could see that she was getting angry.

“Yuu, while I appreciate the sentiment, it's not like Haruna was being serious either.”

“No, seriously die. Die with that gloomy necromancer²⁵ over there!”

And then, another dry sound rang through the room. Two of them this time. Haruna had countered this time.

Death is painful.

I could not translate those words into the cute-Yuu-speak inside me. Haruna also seemed to be at a loss for words. Yuu's blue eyes were filled with sadness.

Trying to break the silence, I gave out a strange yell of “Daaahh!” as if I was at the Inoki Bom-ba-ye²⁶. Haruna began to shovel rice into her mouth. Yuu also returned to eating with a nonchalant face as if nothing had happened.

“Ayumu! More! Super more!”

Yeah yeah, I'll give you a lot this time. I piled up a mountain of rice into her bowl and handed it back to her. Taking the bowl, Haruna showed me a smile lined with her white teeth. Her smile was so lovely that it was contagious.

When I looked in Yuu's direction, I saw a single tear come out of her eye and roll down her cheek.

That's surprising... to think that the usually completely emotionless Yuu would suddenly begin to cry.

“Hey, Yuu! What's wrong? Ah... umm... uhh...”

Drip. Drip. She didn't give out a single sob, and her expression did not change at all, but tears began to spill out of her eyes.

Yuu put her left hand to her cheek, and traced the trails the tears left behind. And then, finally, she seemed to realize that she had been crying.

I didn't know what to do at this sudden turn of events. I looked to Haruna for help, but she cleanly dismissed me, and in the face of my gradually growing bewilderment, I couldn't do anything but stroke her silky silver hair.

Was there anything else I could do...? Anything else I could do for her?

Calm down, me. Why is Yuu crying?

Glancing at the table, I noticed that Yuu's bowl was empty.

Ah, I see! Having been put into a trance by Haruna, I had completely forgotten about refilling Yuu's bowl.

“Sorry, I'll give you more rice right away.”

Flustered, I heaped rice into Yuu's bowl. When I peeked at her face, I saw that tears were no longer flowing out from her eyes. Even Yuu can cry sometimes, huh? After confirming how Yuu could be pretty

human-like sometimes, I tried to enjoy the rest of dinner.

“I would like some miso soup too.”

Yeah yeah. Some miso sou- wait, who the hell are you?!

The people sitting around the table... there was me, Yuu, Haruna, and one more person. A woman. She was wearing low-rise jeans and a camisole along with clothes you would normally see on girls everywhere. Her long hair was tied back with a rubber band. I-It was a ponytail! Ponytails were my biggest weakness![27](#)

Of course, she also had an attractive face and figure, but unlike the other two, she exuded a cold dignified air. And the things that drew my gaze more than anything else were her sparkling jade-colored eyes.

I had said that she was a woman, but she didn't look older than I was. It was just that she exuded an air of maturity.

Since the time I had met Yuu, the girls that have been showing up at my door have all been cute or beautiful, without exception. They all had beautiful, graceful faces that I would not forget. But I haven't seen this particular girl before.

Oh well, I'll give her the miso soup she asked for.

“Hey, Ayumu. Who's this?”

Ahh, it seems like it wasn't one of Haruna's acquaintances. So that means...

She was an acquaintance of the necromancer silently sipping her miso soup next to me. So, while handing over a bowl of miso soup to that mysterious girl (the third mysterious girl)...

“For now... could you introduce yourself?”

“Understood. My name is Seraphim.”

Hooh, her name sounded like it could be an angel's name. It was one of the angelic ranks, right?

Staying silent, I waited for her to continue.

“.....”

With an imposing air, she fixedly stared straight forwards. I couldn't help but be charmed by her beauty. The otherwise silent living room was dominated by the sound of miso soup being sipped.

“.....”

Wait, *that* was her idea of an introduction?! And it didn't seem like I was the only person who thought that way.

“That's it? Don't you have things you like, or special skills, or hobbies? C-Could it be that you're a wizard?! You planning to blow me up or something?!”

Haruna. Are all the wizards you know cruel and merciless or something?

“My likes: Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi. My special skills: Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi. My hobbies: Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi.”

Well at any rate, at least she responded to the question.

“Why are you here?”

“A mission.”

“What kind of mission?”

“To borrow the power of Eucliwood Hellscythe-dono.”²⁸

I glanced in Yuu's direction. The necromancer in question was proceeding with her meal as silently as ever. She didn't seem to care about what was going on around her.

Yuu often had her life targeted. She had the power to bring the dead back to life, so there were an endless supply of beings who tried to kill her and take that power for themselves. Up to now, a countless number of strange things had come visiting.

There were vampires, and vampires. Well, also... vampires? Now that I think about it, vampires came really often.

“Could it be that you’re a vampire?”

At my question, Seraphim-san widened her eyes. Her expression screamed “How did you-?!” But soon she returned back to her cold expression, and nodded once.

“Precisely. I’m a vampire ninja.”

As I thought.

Hm? No, it was a bit different. Well well well well, whatever, it’s fine... ninjas... demons... it’s all pretty much the same.

Wait, that’s not true at all! Am I an idiot?!

Listening to her, I learned that she was a ninja who needed blood to retain her youth and power.

She had been living in a secret mountain village, but the death of their chief had incited a war of succession. The war had continued for hundreds of years, it seemed. And, to suppress that war, she wanted to revive their fallen chief.

So there were still ninja villages in Japan... that’s surprising.

Hm? There’s also the point that everyone who’s come here so far has basically been a vampire. They all had deep crimson eyes and wore black cloaks, so of my own accord, I had labeled them as vampires.

When I asked about this matter, Seraphim-san nodded.

“Yes. They are trying to take Hellscythe-dono’s life and make her unique power their own. Their schemes are precisely meant to hinder our efforts.”

Pouring miso soup down her throat, Seraphim set her empty bowl down onto the table and continued.

“My mission is to request that Hellscythe-dono accompany me, and to protect her life. There are stubborn types that would prefer to just kidnap her, but we respect her power. So if possible, I would like to ask the person herself to come with me of her own free will.”

And that’s how the story ran. Mealtime had ended, and on the table that only bore empty plates Yuu placed a single memo. And then, she put her ballpoint pen to the memo.

Tap tap. She tapped the table twice.

Ayumu. I don’t care. Drive her away.

It seemed like the negotiations had broken down with a single blow. I had also worked hard to defeat all the vampire ninjas that had appeared at our house up until now. But, as Seraphim-san had said, they were the ones who were trying to force us to do what they wanted. They were trying to kidnap Yuu. So I could fight them with no hesitation whatsoever, but this time was a bit...

I mean, she’s a girl, right? And she also had said that she would protect Yuu’s life.

“But there’s no need to fight this time, right?”

At that question, Yuu tap-tapped on the table. She wasn’t writing anything. She seemed to want me to look once again at the memo she had already written. That’s what I thought, but it seemed that she had added something... when did she...

Ayumu. I don’t care. It’s fine, so drive her away.

Hm, what should I do? These were, once again, words that I couldn’t make cute in my head.

Haruna, say something to Yuu, won’t you?

“I see. If you’re a ninja, you can suddenly appear and disappear, right?”

She completely ignored me!

Without even trying to clean up, Haruna got up and left the room.

Did people who came from the magic world Virie not have any interest in supernatural beings outside of Megalo? This is why these young masou shoujo are so...

“What relation are you to Hellsythe-dono?”

As expected, from that beautiful mouth came a beautiful voice. Her fixed stare made me blush.

“Hm? How do I put it...”

Tap tap. I looked over at Yuu.

Servant.

Well, I guess that’s not technically wrong. Personally, I prefer “oniichan.”

“If that’s the case, I will also become your servant. Please call me Sera.”

Sera spoke with a completely serious expression. She won’t mind if I call her Sera too, right?

Soon, I saw that Yuu had added something to the memo on which she had written “Servant.”

I only need one servant. = “For Yuu, only one oniichan is enough!”

“If that’s the case, you don’t need him, right? No matter how I look at it, he seems to be stupid.”

Sera-chan. That really does annoy me, you know. I resent that.

The vampire ninja and zombie had a glaring contest. Sera stood straight up.

“Let’s find somewhere we won’t be disturbed.”

She seems to be pretty determined. Without cleaning up after the

meal, I also stood up and we left the room. If we were going to fight, I knew just the right place.

That place that I was quite fond of.

Part 7

The graveyard was quiet today as well. It was still too soon for people to have fallen asleep, but not even delinquents would want to hang around a graveyard at night.

Because this was a place where zombies came out.

The crater that had formed when I had met Haruna and Kumacchi had magically disappeared, and the gravestone that had been pulverized was also right there, sparkling.

I passed by the lined-up gravestones and headed for the area beneath the huge tree. Here, there was nothing around except that tree, so there was nothing to hinder our movements during our fight.

While listening to the rustling sounds of the leaves in the tree, we glared at each other.

Sera was pretty much the same height as I was, and her long hair, styled into that ponytail, fluttered in the wind. That expression that overflowed with majesty didn't lessen in beauty even now, when we were on the verge of attempting to kill each other.

"Could I just ask you one thing?"

"What?"

"These vampire ninjas or whatever... do they attack humans?"

"Of course. Although, they do not kill them. They just take some of their blood."

"Even the more forceful ones?"

"I cannot say 'definitely' with absolute certainty, but they definitely do not kill humans."

Which was it?!

“But, right now, you’re trying to kill me, aren’t you?”

“It is for the sake of my objectives, so there’s no choice in the matter, is there? And also, you aren’t human.”

Quite right, she is. Her eyes bled red and a black cloak that seemed to cover her entire body appeared. This was her getting into battle stance, I suppose.

Sera spread her arms out, and green leaves appeared to fall out of nowhere. There was that big tree there, so a few leaves might have fallen off, but never this many.

“Let’s begin.”

With just that one word, Sera disappeared. At pretty much the same time, I felt something slice diagonally through my chest. If I hadn’t quickly taken a step backwards, that would have been dangerous.

In front of me, I saw her pretty, long hair and commanding red eyes. Beautiful. It was so beautiful it almost made me shiver.

At that time, her self-introduction earlier echoed through my mind.

“My likes: Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi. My special skills: Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi. My hobbies: Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi.”

Tsubame Gaeshi... making lots of shallow cuts to make your opponent falter, and then finishing him off with one true attack... something like that? But in any case, she was sending a barrage of attacks my way. I kicked off the ground and fell back.

As I had thought, her follow-up attack came at me and cut me deep.

Large amounts of blood fell onto the graveled floor. I was expecting it and tried to dodge, and it still ended like this. As expected from a ninja.

“Impressive. To think you could evade my Tsubame Gaeshi twice.”

Yes, in reality, after her initial counterattack, she had repeated the same movements. It was something like four consecutive cuts.

After that, I ran and she gave chase, and multiple sword flashes cut into my body. I couldn't evade a single one. But none of the wounds were fatal.

Should I have brought the chainsaw?

No, it's too late to have regrets at this point. Instead, I should be taking advantage of my immortal body.

I dared to meet with one of Sera's slashes and moved through it. In exchange for her cutting me almost to my core, I punched Sera with all my might. At my attack, one leaf sprang up and stopped my fist. That single, fluttering leaf had stopped the attack I had put my all into.

But it only stopped that attack for a moment, and when I put more power into the attack I felt the resistance of the leaf vanish. Like that, I struck Sera and sent her flying. Aren't people who punch girls the worst? Yes, that's true. But I would never let myself be killed without fighting back ever again.

Sera quickly got up and closed the distance between us. I guess she wasn't the type of person to keep her distance and calmly assess the situation. I preferred a slower, more calculated type of fight though.

In both her hands there was something that looked like a sword... I guess you could call it a sword.

But it was really a leaf. A single, huge leaf that had been made thin and long.

That extremely long and thin leaf definitely resembled a sword. Wait, does that mean she's made all of these fluttering leaves into swords? As I thought about that, I was once again cut.

This time she had aimed for my neck, and as I wasn't able to keep up with her movements, fresh blood scattered out of the newly opened wound. I tried to get some distance between us, but I couldn't run away.

Now that I look at it, there are thin grass-like leaves piercing into my legs. As I thought, all of these had been made into blades.

“Got you!”

Right in front of me, this imposing girl waved her sword horizontally. She had cut through around half my neck, and blood erupted from the wound. Normally, this would be fatal, wouldn't it?

“It's not over yet!”

“Wha-!”

I grabbed onto the hand of the shocked Sera.

I pulled her close and struck her head with mine. Her head jolted back violently and I followed it up with a body blow. One leaf jumped up to block me, but I didn't pay it heed and followed through. Then, I struck her with my knee, and punched her with my right hand. With 230% of the power a normal human could muster.

Kicking up gravel, Sera noisily tumbled along the ground.

As I watched her, something came flying at me and I blocked it.

It was what appeared to be an autumn leaf. It had been changed into something like a shruiken. I pulled it out after it had lodged itself into my arm, and even with 230% of my strength I couldn't bend it... to think she could counterattack while in that condition...

... I mean, I had punched her with the intent to kill.

As expected from a vampire... no, a vampire ninja. As another member of the undead, I found myself respecting her.

“I underestimated you...”

Her cloak waving, Sera opened her arms wide. A pair of green colored wings appeared behind her. I couldn't say that those many small leaves didn't resemble detached feathers. She had gathered those leaves together and formed wings of blades.

“Here I come.”

She came at me even faster than before. And it was an attack that came from above. Her wings flapped, and numerous tree leaves fluttered down, looking quite like detached feathers.

“Hiken, Tsubamegaeshi... Hachiren!”²⁹

At those words, I was cut in eight directions all at once. It wasn’t just by the sword she was holding. The leaves around me had all been made into swords as well... not good. Here comes the follow-up strike.

In an instant, my body had been torn to pieces.

I twisted my body, but my right arm had flown off, and not only my legs, but my entire lower half was gone. There was no more strength left in my body as it lay on the ground like that.

I mean, she had attacked me from all angles, right? There’s no way I could have avoided it all. Absolutely no way.

The angel with the black cloak landed in front of me, and she turned those red eyes my way.

Those green swords she held in both hands and that long hair. I feel like I’ve seen something similar before. Ah, yes... someone holding a long thin object in both hands with long hair. The person who had killed me.

But really, to be able to use two swords like that was difficult even for a master.

Also, Haruna had said that ninjas were able to disappear and reappear. If it were a vampire ninja, it would be an easy task to infiltrate anywhere.

As I thought, Haruna was somehow connected to these events. I’ll have to ask her about it next time.

So the criminal... was a vampire ninja?

“... 300.” I rolled my way to my lower half and reattached it.

Like a magnet, my body was drawn in and I could soon move it, allowing me to run to collect the hand that had fallen on the floor. Perhaps she was shocked at my sudden motions, but Sera flew up into the sky.

“... 410.”

“He can still move?!”

I heard a rustling sound from behind me. It was the sound of those green wings flapping.

“502.” Reattaching my right hand, I kicked off the ground and flew upwards.

“Hiken, Tsu-“

Gritting my teeth, I hit her with all my might. Her wings tried to cover her body, but my full power attack was almost at 600% strength and easily penetrated her defenses, hitting her.

But, unfortunately, what I hit was not a person, but a log.

In the span of a second, Sera had transported herself atop the biggest branch in the tree.

What I had hit was the black cloak and the log. A body switching technique? Ninjas are cowards, aren't they?

“Pretty strong, aren't you?”

Sera came down from the tree, and we once again fell into a staring contest. Maybe she had used all the leaves to make those wings, but there weren't any leaves flying around anymore. All that was left were the two swords she had in her hands.

“Could I just ask you one thing?” I spat out the same question that I had at the start of the fight.

“What?” And she gave the same response.

“Do you really not kill humans?”

“Yes. So what?”

She kept her eyes fixed on me. As beautifully and as directly as always... it was gorgeous.

“Well, then everything’s fine.”

I still had my doubts on whether I could completely believe her... but I decided to trust these eyes. This girl, Sera, didn’t seem to be the type that would lie. So she wasn’t the one who had killed me. I’ll believe that. If I do say so myself, girls were a huge weak point of mine. And it’s not like I can just keep on saying that until I fix that weak point... I should just live alone...

For some reason, Sera let go of her swords. Her swords transformed back to small leaves, and gently fell to the floor. Her red eyes returned to their normal shade of jade. She let out one breath, and showed me a slightly satisfied expression.

“Well, I’m stumped. Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem like I can defeat you. Even with my secret sword technique. I see that I need to train more. And I’m also not inclined to bring out my ultimate technique. I’ll have to think of some new moves...”

Somehow, it seemed that the battle had ended. Although, if she continued to use that body switching technique, it’s not like I would have been able to do much against her.

“So...”

“Yes. Please allow me to return home.”

As if she had guessed what I had wanted to say, Sera turned her back to me with her ponytail swish-swishing behind her and quickly left.

The masou shoujo Haruna and the Megalo.

The necromancer Yuu and vampire ninjas.

Lately, way too many strange things have been happening. Was this also because I had become a zombie?

I left the graveyard and slowly walked home. At any rate, that was quite a flashy way to chop me into pieces, wasn't it? This is the first time I've found it so difficult to move.

When I arrived home, I took my shoes off in the entranceway.

I know that was a pretty banal statement, but this was strange. I mean, apart from Yuu's shoes, there was one other pair. Of course, they weren't mine. And I hadn't bought shoes for Haruna yet. Right now, it seemed that Haruna was using the underwear I had bought for Yuu to use.

It couldn't be... as I thought that, I turned towards the living room.

And in there was the form of that imposing vampire ninja.

Why is she still here?

Didn't she say she was going home?

... Hm? Ah, I see. She meant *my* home.

Give me a break. Was she planning on staying here too?

Tap tap. As always, Yuu called to me in her usual way.

What's the meaning of this? = "Oniichan. Why is this person here?"

Hmph. That's what I want to ask!

Somehow or other, it seemed that like how I was Yuu's servant, Sera had become my servant. And I consented to that arrangement.

Call it giving up if you must. If I were just living with Yuu, I could still find some alone time, but now with Haruna in the picture my dreams had vanished... so whatever, she can do what she wants.

By the way, if she's my servant, she'll listen to anything I want,

right?

I can make her call me oniichan, right?

Well, isn't that great? And so, I suggested it to her.

"No. That's disgusting." She clearly and resolutely refused. She seemed to be the type that would have no problem pointing it out when she didn't like something. It seemed like she had an imposing personality no matter where it was applied.

"Well, at least call me master or something."

"No. You shitty insect."

Her eyes, pretty as always, pierced into me as if they were looking at the lowliest creature on earth, and her words shattered my dreams.

It seems that she was even able to make "words" into blades.[30](#)

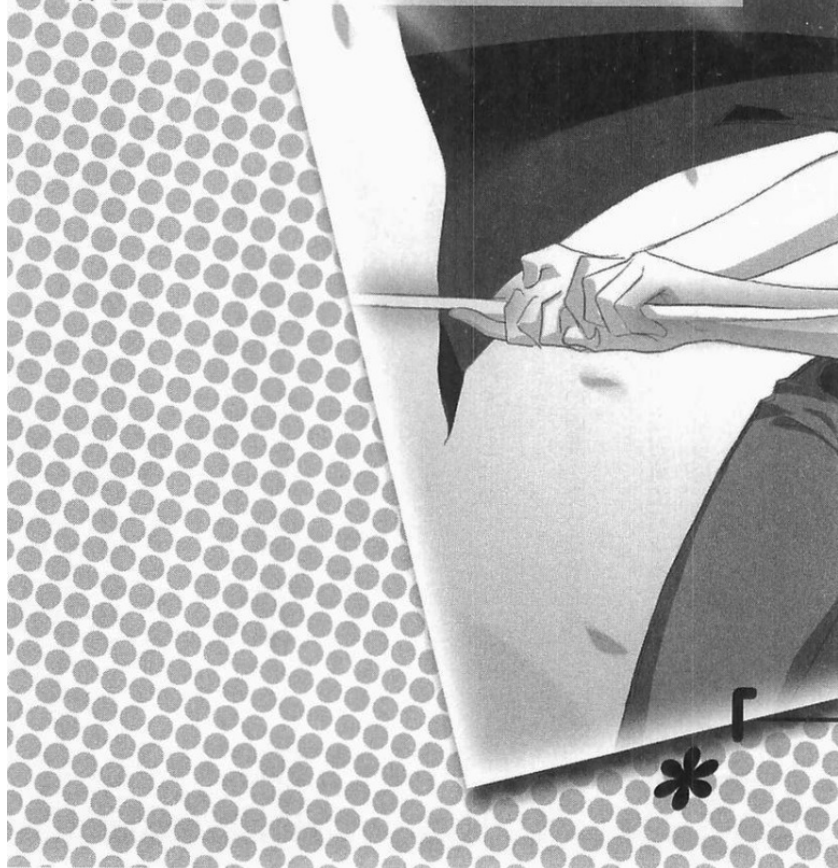
Chapter 2 – There's no Enemy We Can't Take Down!

この家は、とても賑やかですね。ハルナがバタバタ動いているのを見ると、少し微笑ましい。

味噌汁も美味ですし、ヘルサイズ殿も想像していたより可愛い女の子で、居心地の良さそうで何よりです。

ただ、この辺りには妖怪の類が非常に多い。クジラやアリクイの妖怪など、私は初めて見ましたね。

あと、歩はとても気持ちが悪いです。私の料理にケチを付けるなどと……。





第二話

倒せない敵はいないっ!!

今度ボウリングにでも誘ってみましょう。
もちろん、歩以外のみんなで。

Part 1

There was no school on Saturday. Today I had plans to meet with that survivor of the serial murders.

After all, I wanted to know what kind of person had killed me. If I could get that information, I would gladly go meet with this person.

Long hair and a long thin weapon. From my memory of what had pierced me, it might have been a sword. Well, it's not like that gave me much to go on, but this person was probably not a normal human, and might have been a vampire ninja or something close to that. I also considered the thought that it might have been a Megalo. That's what I had considered, but...

"Megalo don't have weapons."

That's what Haruna had asserted.

When I asked "Are you sure?" she responded "Of course I'm sure!!" and got angry.

And, from what Sera had said, vampire ninjas didn't kill normal humans. There was some "law" that prevented that.

She went so far as to say, "Those that break the law are punished severely, but I have yet to see anyone suffer that punishment."

Well, what kind of person was it then? If they had held one weapon in both hands I could understand, but going off killing people with two swords like that required an extreme amount of strength and skill. Well, it might have been possible for a zombie. And also for a certain vampire ninja-sama somewhere.

Part 2

It was evening, and I was walking along with Orito. It had been raining since the middle of the day, so it was great. Those terrible rays of sunlight couldn't win against those clouds after all.

Orito had agreed to share his deep blue umbrella with me, and we looked just like two lovebirds walking shoulder to shoulder.

"Aikawa, what's with that smile? That's gross."

"Is it?"

Good weather put people into good moods after all. My head had been getting terribly burnt before, right? It's definitely not because I'm walking home with Orito. Don't get me wrong.

"If you smile like that later, Kyouko will be happy too."

Orito smiled. Why did it annoy me when boys smiled? Kyouko-chan was the survivor of the serial murders that I was now going to meet.

"Now that I think about it, how exactly does Kyouko-chan know about me?"

"Beats me. Maybe she met you at some point during junior high school?"

"Well, I was pretty popular after all."

"Yeah right. Only people like witches would fall in love with you."

"But you definitely said that Kyouko-chan was in love with me or something."

"Yeah. When I went to visit her she seemed awfully keen on meeting you. I dunno, maybe she got hit in the head and suffered brain damage."

You're going to go that far?!

"Hey, Aikawa. Kyouko is like a second little sister to me. If you do something strange to her I'm going to kill you, alright?"

"Yeah yeah got it."

We leisurely strolled along while talking about our bowling outing tomorrow (I had completely forgotten about that). Being able to talk to a normal person like this about normal things almost made me forget that I was in the middle of a giant whirlpool of murder and violence.

I definitely didn't want to get him involved in all this. There were things... I didn't want to lose. Everyone had those kinds of things...

Even zombies.

Part 3

Room number 305. Orito entered the room with a huge “Heya!” and dispersed the reserved atmosphere caused by the particular scent and stillness that hung around hospitals. I timidly followed after him. There were a few grannies in the room, but in the middle of them there was just one girl, obviously young, who stood out. Or perhaps it would be better to say that she felt out of place. Her left arm seemed to have been wounded and was wrapped in a cast.

Now that I thought about it, shouldn’t I have brought a get-well present? I didn’t come with anything.

“Ah, Orito-sensei! ... Eh? A-Aikawa-san?”

Her hair was a bit longer than shoulder length, and although she looked to be around the same age, she was taller than both Yuu and Haruna. The minute she looked in my direction, she began to get flustered. Orito casually approached her.

“Hey, Kyouko! Didn’t I tell you to make your hair into twin tails? Geez, Aikawa is really moe for twin tails!”

Since when? Well, it’s not like I don’t like them.

“Ah, yes! I didn’t think he would really come... I’ll do that right away! Ah, but I can’t use one of my hands! Sensei, help me!”

She mumbled something with a sulky expression, and began to style her hair into a twin tails with Orito’s help.

Kyouko-chan kept her eyes on the floor, her face as red as an apple. As I watched this pleasant scenery, I sat myself down in a round chair and pulled myself up to where Orito and the bed were.

To the other people in room 305: I’m really sorry for bringing such a noisy fellow with me.

I looked around, and, well... nobody was paying us any heed. I thought there would be some chatter in the room, but in the end, I guess older folks didn't have much to say to junior high school students.

"Umm... Aikawa... san. Do you remember me?"

Kyouko spoke timidly while continuing to stare at the ground. I didn't know whether I should lie and tell her I did remember her, but I ultimately decided to tell the truth.

"... Sorry, I don't. I'm really sorry."

When I apologetically lowered my head, Kyouko-chan frantically waved her hands.

"No, it's completely fine! In fact, it's... it's good that you don't remember!"

Did I do something weird to this girl in the past or something?

"Hey hey Aikawa, you went to the same junior high school, right? Alright, done! How is it, Aikawa?! Cute, isn't she?"

"Ahh yeah, outrageously cute."

Those were my honest feelings. She really was exceedingly cute, sitting there looking shyly down at the floor.

"Really?"

The petite Kyouko-chan looked up at me with upturned eyes, and I nodded. And then she gave me a shy smile.



Orito then took the initiative in the conversation, and began to talk about how fun high school life was.

Kyouko-chan would also be coming to our high school, right? Orito

seemed to want that to happen, but ultimately that would be Kyouko-chan's choice, wouldn't it? Also, even though she listened to him talk with a smile, every once in a while she appeared lonely.

Orito had gone to the bathroom, so I asked.

"Did something happen? You seem a bit lonely."

"Yes. The truth is... I'll be going to live with my grandfather in Kyoto. And I don't want to disappoint Orito-sensei..."

I see. Orito had been chatting under the assumption that she was coming to our high school... and she couldn't bring herself to tell him the truth. So she sometimes looks like that...

Alright, while Orito isn't here, let's get to the topic at hand.

"This might be a bit sudden, Kyouko-chan, but did you happen to see the face of the person who attacked you? Even the smallest bit of information is fine."

"... Honestly... yes, I saw."

Yes, as expected. The murderer wouldn't let his or her face be seen that easily.

.... Wait, what?

"Y-You saw? Seriously?"

Kyouko-chan nodded vigorously... would I seriously be able to get useful information this easily?

"W-What kind of person was it?"

I was somewhat excited while I asked that question. Yes, excited by this twin-tailed girl.

"She had these really beautiful blue eyes... I think she was around the same age as I am."

I began to doubt my ears. Those particular traits brought one

person to mind.

“Did she have these strange gauntlets on, and straight, flowing silver hair?”

“Y-Yes, that’s it! She definitely was like that!”

Having been able to get what she wanted to communicate through to me, Kyouko-chan was very excited.

... What the hell? What the hell... it was Yuu?

There’s nobody else who would wear that kind of outfit, right? Dammit, what the hell was going on?

“Do you know the person who did this?”

“Ah, I might know something, but I think I’m mistaking someone for someone else.”

“Please tell me! Tell me who it was!”

It never crossed my mind that I would be the one getting asked questions about these happenings. Her eyes widened with enthusiasm, and I was greatly perplexed as to how I should answer her.

“The person I know is silent and emotionless, and I don’t think she’s the kind of person who would do something so reckless. So I think I’m mistaking her for someone else.”

Her twin-tails swished back and forth, and she shook her head.

“I think it’s probably her. The criminal was also someone who had an emotionless face. She really didn’t look like she was going to try to kill me.”

Seriously...? Was it really Yuu?

And if that were the case, then the person I was looking for was also Yuu?

Or maybe what happened to Kyouko-chan was not a part of the serial murders?

And that's why she survived?

Or maybe, on the contrary, my murder had nothing to do with the serial murders and Yuu was the serial murderer?

"Kyouko-chan, when were you attacked?"

"I was attacked late at night on May 26th."

Wasn't that the day I met Yuu? And I'm sure there were no survivors in the house where I was killed. The news had verified that.

So, on that day, there was another murder case? If there were, it wasn't shown on the news at all. Could it be that the survivor was afraid the killer would come back and finish the job, so she didn't speak publically about it? Or could it really have been a different incident?

My thoughts were in chaos. I looked around the room for something to help me change the subject. There was a lot of get-well fruit lying around, along with bags of clothing, and when I moved my body to look around a bit more I felt my foot kick something. Peeking under the bed, I found an object that seemed quite out of place in a hospital.

It was a huge wooden sword. I had never closely examined a wooden sword before, but I was really impressed by how big it was. It was to the point that I thought there might have been another small wooden sword in this one. Was this a memento left over from some of her deceased family members or something?

Kyouko-chan flushed a brilliant red and desperately tried to hide the sword from me.

"Why is there a wooden sword here?"

I suppressed a smile and asked.

“It’s a family heirloom... just kidding.”

As if to say “Hah, how’s that?” she raised both her arms in a victory pose³¹ and gave a little laugh. Pretty charming.

I broke out into a grin, and Kyouko-chan showed me a puzzled expression.

“What’s wrong? Your face is red... don’t tell me you have a fever...”

That lovely face approached mine. On her body there was a captivating pair of hills with in between that I would never think a junior high school student would have. Perhaps I was sensitive to cold, but when she put her hand to my forehead, the cool sensation ended up making my head heat up instead.

“Hm, you don’t feel feverish.”

Even for someone who preferred small breasts, I couldn’t take my eyes away from them. When she removed her hand from my forehead, Kyouko-chan licked her bottom lip.

“So, please tell me about that person.”

“Hm? Are we still on that? It’s hard to explain.”

“Hm? What?” Seeming flustered, Kyouko-chan leaned her neck to the side.

“Hm?”

“No... what? Hmm? U-Umm... were we done talking about this?”

“What does Kyouko-chan want to do to the criminal if she meets her?”

“... Well... umm... I would ask her to please stop doing things like this.”

Ahh... in my mind, I realized how much of a good girl she really was.

“So, that arm... does it hurt?”

With a somewhat sad expression, Kyouko-chan nodded.

... At any rate, it appeared that she wasn't a zombie.

Right then, the spiky-haired Orito returned from the bathroom.

“Ahh, what a nice atmosphere~. Seeing a young boy talking to a young girl at her bedside like this...”

Moving his eyeglass frames back and forth while grinning, he was the spitting image of a master of sexual harassment.

After Orito came back, the conversation once again turned to school, and to repair the atmosphere I put on my best zombie smile and joined in on the conversation.

And after the lively conversation, Kyouko-chan and I exchanged mailing addresses.

“Alright, Aikawa, shall we head back?”

Did you run out of things to talk about? Orito suddenly stood up while making that suggestion. It seemed that he wasn't making a suggestion, but had already decided to head back. Following him, I also stood up.

“Umm!”

“Hm?”

“Umm... thank you very much. I'm really glad that I was able to talk to you.”

My heart jumped in the face of that last angelic smile.

Girls' smiles are just the best.

If only that necromancer and that vampire ninja would follow her example.

Part 4

It was nearly sunset, and the after-rain sunlight that lightly peeked through the clouds burned the sky an orange color.

After exiting the hospital, I crossed the street and began to head for a convenience store. Next to me, Orito spun his deep blue umbrella around and around.

“Thanks, Aikawa.”

Walking across the still-wet asphalt, Orito pushed his glasses up and patted down his chest.

“For what? I didn’t do anything.”

“Kyouko was satisfied enough just from seeing your face.”

A serious expression appeared on Orito’s face. Feeling a bit self-conscious, I turned my gaze away from Orito’s glasses.

“Hmph. What’s so good about this thing?”

Hm? This cute voice...

When I turned in the direction I had heard the voice from, I saw a certain bishoujo with a bouncing chestnut-colored ahoge with the usual creases in her brow. Today’s outfit consisted of a dress shirt and a pink thong. I really had to buy her some trousers or a skirt. Also, some shoes.

“H-Hey, Aikawa, what’s with this first-rate bishoujo?”

Orito stood in shock, forgetting even to blink.

Well, there’s no helping that. After all, she’s that cute and she’s also in this outfit. Oh also, from his words, it seemed like he had completely forgotten about the incident with the crayfish yesterday. Thank goodness.

“Hey! Don’t look over here!”

She desperately tried to hide her panties with her dress shirt. If you’re that embarrassed by it, why the hell didn’t you put on some trousers? And is that my little brother’s shirt? That won’t actually hide your panties, you know.

“Ah. Umm... this girl is...”

If she showed up so suddenly looking like that, a Megalo is probably involved. And if that’s true, we’re going to end up wiping Orito’s memories later anyways, so there’s no point in making introductions now. So I didn’t really know how to respond to Orito.

“Ayumu! Here it comes!”

Haruna hid behind my back and tugged on my sleeve. Even if you say it’s coming, I can’t see a single sparkle in the sky. They usually fly down like a meteorite, but is this time different?

Looking up, my mouth dropped to the floor. Up there was indeed something that looked like a Megalo, replete in the usual schoolboy’s uniform.

Right above the hospital I had just come out of, there was a huge, mile long³² blue whale Megalo... my God that was just way too big.

Like a blimp, it was longer than it was wide, and drifted across the cloudy skies.

It advanced slowly like a cloud, and like a paraglider gradually descended. At this rate, bad things were going to happen.

“That’s a triple A rank Megalo, All Loss No Victory Shironaga!”

Oh? Her mistake this time is pretty easy to understand. There’s way too much losing in that name.

“No, that’s not right. Um... Ehhh... Umm... Demon Baron Shironaga!”

I already knew that when she was out of ideas, she would call

everything a Demon Baron.

Well, right now, I was also pretty out of ideas. I've never fought something that freakishly huge. It's not like I'm a Sentai hero or a three minute limit hero.³³ I'm just a zombie.

Would my attacks even get through? No no, there's no time to be thinking that. If that huge thing actually comes down, bad things would happen to this town.

"Haruna, please take care of Orito!"

"Hueh? Take care of who?"

"That spiky haired guy with glasses over there! Get him out of harm's way!"

"Why does a genius like me have to do something like that? I don't care if all the humans on this world go off and die."

"Hey hey. What the hell is with that bombshell of an announcement? Why are you fighting then? I was sure it was for the sake of this world..."

"There is only one reason I am working to defeat Megalo! To get school credit! If I defeat enough Megalo, I can graduate even if I don't attend enough class. This is a much more certain way to earn credits than going to that boring school!"

And while she went on and on about that she puffed out her underdeveloped chest. How the hell can she be so proud of her own laziness like that?

"What a selfish girl."

"Don't call me selfish! Go defeat him quickly! For me! Because it's for me!"

Unfortunately, I wasn't doing what I was doing for Haruna's sake, but either way I kicked off the asphalt.

I jumped on top of a fence, scaled a telephone pole, and headed in

the direction of the hospital via rooftop. Of course, the people walking down the road stared at me dumbfounded with their mouths open. They were probably thinking “*What the hell, are you a ninja or something?*” or something like that. Unfortunately, the ninja is at home. The one here is a zombie.

Haruna chased after me. Even though she hadn’t transformed, it seemed she could keep up with me just fine. Well, she should be the one fighting then.

That thought passed through my mind, but I knew better. Without transforming, there’s no way either of us could beat that Megalo, right?

I knew that. It wasn’t weak enough that I could beat it without transforming. After all, this was a rank AAA Megalo, even higher than the rank AA Zarii-san.

“Haruna, have you ever fought against something that huge before?”

“Naturally. That type of thing is common in my world.”

She seemed pretty smug about that.

“I see. To put it frankly, I’m not confident this time. If it was just a question of myself, that would be fine, but I can’t do this while simultaneously protecting the city.”

Even if that huge thing moved a bit, houses would be destroyed. And if the hospital were destroyed, that would be guaranteed to be disastrous, and I didn’t have enough strength to fight while protecting that building.

“I see. You can’t defend against Shironaga’s attacks by yourself. Well, it would be easy for me though.”

“Really?”

“Of course, really. When it comes to this genius bishoujo demon baroness Haruna-chan, there is not a *single* thing I can’t do!”

As her ahoge bounced to and fro like a puppy's tail and she beat her smallish chest, what sounded like a horn or something echoed through the area.

A very low frequency sound echoed through the middle of town. It was the vibrations of the atmosphere that the whale had caused. Along with this *bwoohhn*³⁴ sound, a purple wind was sent through the area.

Now that I think about it, Zarii-san also had done something similar.

“Haruna, that purple wind...”

“You should know just from looking at it... that's the Megalo releasing magical energy...”

The purple wind coiled around Haruna's body.

And when it did that, Haruna's shoulders suddenly jumped. Maybe she could feel a chill or something, but she quickly shook her head back and forth, and after opening her eyes wide, she hazily opened her mouth.

“Oo... aaa... aaah...”

Even though she had been so energetic up to now, Haruna crouched down into the fetal position. The same thing had happened when we were fighting with that crayfish.

“Hey, Haruna.”

“... What... is this...? What... this feeling...”

Haruna looked like a frightened puppy. She bit down on her lightly trembling lips.

“Haruna? Haruna!”

At my yells, Haruna raised her head up. Her eyes were filled with irritation.

“What should I do, Ayumu... I...”

With that trembling voice, that lonely-sounding voice, she continued to wring out her words.

“I’m... afraid of Megalo...”

That confession hit me like a ton of bricks. I had never thought I would hear her say she was afraid of anything.

Bwoohhn.

The low frequency sound once again echoed through the area. Haruna’s body had stiffened and she once again bit her lip. She was desperately trying to force down her fear.

“It’ll be alright, Haruna.”

“Alright? Are you an idiot?! I can’t do this! I’ll... be killed!”

“It’ll be alright, Haruna.”

“Don’t say irresponsible things! Someone like you-“

“Don’t you know? I’m strong.”

“Don’t get cocky! Someone like you will never be able to protect me!”

“That might be true. But, don’t you know? There’s not a *single* thing Haruna can’t do.”

“Hueh...?”

“Maybe I can’t protect Haruna. And maybe Haruna, who can’t transform into a masou shoujo, can’t do anything about that huge thing. But I’m strong. And Haruna can do anything. So what if those two people joined forces?”

For some reason, Haruna blushed and blinked in surprise. Then, the corners of her lips turned upwards, and she gave me a splendid boyish smile.

“There’s no enemy we can’t take down!”

“Right? So please help me. Please.”

“Hmph, I guess there’s no choice. Just this once.”

Looking happy for some reason, Haruna stepped out in front of me. Hey, I can see your panties, you know.

“I can’t transform so I can’t use attack magic, but I can at least set up a barrier. It’ll be fine if I just make one that protects the surrounding people and buildings, right? Making a single barrier like that is easy. Also, Shironaga uses the power of water. I’ll also do something about that with a barrier, so you don’t hold anything back and strike him dead. OK?”

“OK. That’s more than I had expected.”

I sent a kamikaze attack at the towering body in front of me. Jumping towards the hospital wall from this house’s roof, I kicked off the wall and jumped up towards Shironaga’s head.

“This is all of a sudden, but 400%!!”

With a loud *Bam!* I scored a critical hit to Shironaga’s stupidly huge face with a midair roundhouse kick. Receiving my attack, Shironaga’s huge body began to topple to the side.

Crap! He’s going to crush the houses! Is what I thought, but ripples appears in midair and Shironaga’s huge body stopped as if it had hit a wall.

And then, Shironaga began to be pushed back to his original position.

I see. So this is what Haruna meant by a barrier. It would be incredibly effective if Shironaga were surrounded by these barriers, right?

Shironaga’s huge fin became even huger. The air around his fin rippled like it had before in an effort to stop the expansion, but the fin easily broke through. Something showered down to the ground

like broken glass and disappeared. It seemed that the strategy to surround him with barriers had failed.

“Can this guy really be taken down?”

Shironaga calmly lingered about and we exchanged stares. He slowly descended, but the moment he approached the hospital, ripples formed once again and repelled him. The strength of these ripples were in a different class as those before.

Now that I took a closer look, I could see Haruna on the roof of the hospital. She was enveloped in a ruby-colored light and both her hands were extended in Shironaga’s direction, almost as if she was holding him at bay by herself. Well, that was actually the case.

“Hurry up and transform into a masou shoujo! Didn’t I tell you I can only stop him like this four times?!”

Definitely not. Is that honestly something you should be telling me *this* late in the game?!

Hm? Hasn’t she already stopped him three times? First when I knocked him down, then when the fin expanded, and now while he was descending.

... So, she only could do that one more time...?

Geez... I guess I’m out of options. I didn’t want to transform though...

I went over to Haruna’s location and picked up the chainsaw that had been dropped there. I chanted the spell with a dullness that exceeded the dullness I felt when made to read from a textbook in Japanese class.

“Nomobuyo, woshi, hashitawa, dokeda, gunmiicha, dei, ribura.”

I was enveloped in a brilliant light, and my clothes ripped. And then, that skirt... I could feel the tears coming on. Battles are hard things, aren’t they...?

Having transformed into a masou shoujo, I could fly into the sky

just by thinking about it. I pierced the whale's stomach with the chainsaw and like that, ripped it apart... masou shoujo are just way too powerful.

I thought it was over, but in the end I was being optimistic, and I saw the wound gradually close up from the point at which I had first pierced his stomach. It was faster than even I would heal with my zombie body.

So, what should I do now? Did he have vital organs I could attack or something?

As I was thinking that, it happened. Shironaga finally began to do something flashy. Speaking of movements that whales were known to do...

Yes, it was that.

Like a volcano erupting, a thick spray of salt water flew up from Shironaga's head. An absurd amount of water began to descend like a waterfall from the sky.

I ran desperately from the water, and stared at it from a long distance away.

As if a thick fog had set in, the sky became dyed with white. It was like watching a huge water fountain. Not good. If this continued, this entire city would get swallowed up, wouldn't it? It really did seem like enough water to do that. And the whale just continued and continued and continued to spray out salt water.

Looking down at the city sprawled out below me, I saw the entire city flooded under the surging waves... or so I thought, but the city didn't seem different at all. It looked completely normal.

Ah, I see. Haruna had defended the city against the attack. I gave her a standing ovation from the bottom of my heart, and hurriedly returned to the hospital roof.

"Ayumu! What the hell are you doing?! Take it down fast! I'm at my limit!"

She looked at me and raised what was close to a desperate shriek. Well, if I could take it down, I would have already done that...

“How exactly do I kill that thing?”

“Ughh!! If you cut off its head it’ll die, right?! Do. It. Fast!!”

I see. Wait, you want me to cut off that thing? His neck is huge.

If only there was someone else here that could fly and was just about as strong as I was...

Ah, there was.

“Hellscythe-dono told me to come to check out the situation... this city has quite a number of strange things in it, doesn’t it?”

Very conveniently, a beautiful girl clad in a black cloak flew down onto the hospital roof with a swirl of green leaves.

“That is really great timing.”

“Ayumu. That outfit is really quite disgusting... that outfit is really quite disgusting.”

Why did she have to say that twice? I could feel an aura signaling “I don’t want it to seem like we know each other, so stay away from me” coming off her in huge waves.

“Well, I’m sorry about that. But without this, I wouldn’t be able to fly.”

I felt a gaze like a sharp spear near the area of my skirt. Is she really so offended by my outfit? Well I’m really sorry.

“Ayumu. What is that?”

I don’t know if she had accepted my outfit, or if she just didn’t care anymore, but her gaze turned towards Shironaga.

“Well, for now, let’s just say it doesn’t look like a friend.”

“Ahh, certainly. An enemy, then?”

With her piercing red eyes, Sera gazed at Shironaga.

To stop the water, Haruna had activated her barrier for the fourth time. If he rained water down like that again, the houses would be crushed to powder. We had to hurry.

“Will you help?”

“Understood. Here I go.”

Flapping her green-colored wings, Sera flew. Her retreating figure was beautiful and dependable. I took off and chased after her. Showing off everything under my skirt.

At this time, I finally came to understand how girls must feel when they wanted to hide their panties.

Telling Sera that we had to cut off his head, in order to be able to cut through faster than he could heal, we surrounded Shironaga on the left and right.

Thrusting my chainsaw violently around the collar of his school uniform, I flew along the whale's body. Sera was probably doing working on the other side of the whale.

“Ayumu! I can't... hold on anymore...!”

Hurry. Hurry. Hurry.

I felt the pressure building up.

I see it! There's where Sera had started. The sound was gradually closing, but I was faster.

Just a bit more... Hurry. Hurry. Hurry.

The wound I was carving met up with the beginning point of the wound Sera had made. With this, we had completed the circle. Sera was faster than I was so there was no mistaking it. Phew.

Hm? Shironaga's neck didn't move. Why? We definitely cut the complete circle.

At that point, a ringing sound, as if a bell had been broken, echoed through the area. The water fell and covered the city. The barrier that had been holding it back had shattered. It was like a dam had broken. Water ran through the streets between buildings like rivers and washed away cars. The roar of water echoed from throughout the city.

And what's more, the wound that we had inflicted on Shironaga had disappeared. What just happened?

Then I realized it. I cursed myself for being so stupid and dimwitted.

If I cut my arm in a circle with a thin razor³⁵, there's no reason my arm would fall off from that. There's no way this small chainsaw blade could cut off that huge of a head.

Her green wings fluttering, Sera returned to my position. Her usually cool facial expression had cracked a bit. Seeing the flooded streets, even someone like Sera would feel a bit pressured.

"Ayumu, this is not good. The town is being washed away!"

"I know that."

"Do you have a counter-plan?!"

"... I know, I know. I'm thinking."

"What are you being so calm about?!"

"Sera, don't be in such a hurry. All that's going to do is make things worse."

"... Ugh."

With a bitter expression, Sera covered her mouth with her hand.

When I looked down, I saw houses being attacked by what looked almost like a tsunami. Were the people inside alright?

The water still hadn't reached the second story of the buildings, but

even then it was enough to cover the cars on the street. It was more than enough to swallow up people.

Even though I couldn't feel pain, I felt a stinging in my heart. It was disappointment. I couldn't protect them.

What should I do? Should I prioritize aiding the city or taking down the Megalo? Was human life the most important thing here? Sera also seemed at a loss, and clenched her fists tight.

"Ayumu! Take it down fast! The only way to stop this water is to take him down!"

Sounding out of breath, Haruna yelled at me from the hospital roof. If we defeated him, the water would disappear?

When I asked her that, she screamed back "No shit!"³⁶ Well, tell me that earlier, dammit.

"Alright. Sera, can you do another half-circle? If possible, with a sword around five times as long as last time."

"It is possible. What do you intend to do?"

"I'm going to kick him with all my strength. Like this, I can exceed any and all of my limitations. If you cut the lower half with a longer sword, and I kick him with all my strength, it'll definitely be torn off, right?"

"Understood. I have faith in your strength. Ahh, you might be a hentai, but I have faith in your strength."

You didn't have to go back and qualify the first statement, you know.

Sera quickly flew off.

Shironaga once again spewed out salt water, and it seemed like it would be difficult to approach him. But as expected from a ninja, Sera dodged the water skillfully and successfully approached the whale.

Alright.

“... 460%.” In midair, I relaxed my limbs. I closed my eyes, and slowly gathered my strength.

“... 680. As expected from a masou shoujo. I’m still not at full power.”

“Ayumu! Do it fast!”

I could hear voices. The sound of destruction and despair. Sorry everyone, just wait a little bit longer. Everything will be over soon.

“840. Is this the limit? No, I still can go a bit further.”

When I opened my eyes, I saw that Sera had just finished with her half-circle. Looking closely, I saw that she had descended within inches of the hospital roof.

Shall I do it? If I don’t do it quickly, the wound’s going to close.

“Ugeeeeeeeeeeehhhh!!!”

I struck with enough speed to break the sound barrier. With all my might, I kicked Shironaga in his terribly huge jaw.

I was expecting his neck to snap like how you would split a baked sweet potato.

But Shironaga’s head exploded. From the impact of my kick.

Pieces of pulpy meat fell to the ground and disappeared, and the water also drew back. His huge body turned into white particles and scattered in all directions, returning to the sky and disappearing.

It looked like we had done it.

I joined back with Haruna and while receiving another lecture on how to manipulate memories (which I had forgotten), I healed the water-damaged city.

Yes, this time, I had to perform the memory manipulation in a very wide area. And when I did so, Sera was naturally affected as well since she was in this area. And it was difficult to control to what extent the target's memories were manipulated. It's fine if her memories disappeared, but it'd be nice if Sera could be aware of the situation since we were living together... Should I just tell her? Ugh, I'm so worn out...

But leaving that aside, masou shoujo are pretty amazing, aren't they? They really might be able to do anything like Haruna had said.

"Ayumu. How long are you planning on staying in that disgusting outfit?"

As Sera stared at me with cold eyes, I took one deep breath and I explained the situation as simply as I could. "If I changed out of this, I would become naked, right? And that's even more disgusting, right?"

But then, Haruna spoke up.

"You can just repair your clothes."

"Hm? What do you mean?"

When she explained it to me, for the first time ever, I wanted to smack Haruna.

With the magic I had used to repair the buildings, I could also restore my clothes. Normally, masou shoujo used that kind of magic to return to their normal forms. Well that's the first time I've heard of that. You should have told me that after we fought Zarii. Or rather, you should have told me that when you taught me the transformation spell. There's too much you haven't explained. Well, whatever, she's cute so I'll let her off the hook.

For now, I had finished manipulating the memories, so shall we return home?

"Ayumu!"

Sera once again transformed a few leaves into swords and held them in both hands. Her red eyes pierced straight through mine. Don't make such a scary face, dammit.

"What's wrong?"

Crrkk!

Something pierced through my heart. Attacking me from the back... how cowardly. But what had pierced my heart was not a sword. And it was not a spear... what the hell was this?

I felt someone pushing my back, and I was caught by Sera. When I looked back, I saw an anteater in a schoolboy's uniform. The second one today, then...?

"That's the heavyweight Megalo, Muhammad Kui!"³⁷

As if matching Haruna's words, the anteater jumped back and forth with light footwork while it stared at me. As always, the Megalo's eyes were round, cute things.

Geez. Do I have to transform again? I just changed back.

Gripping the chainsaw tightly, I begrudgingly began to chant again, when Haruna inferred what I was trying to do and stopped me.

"You can only become a masou shoujo once every twenty-four hours! If only I could transform..."

You're kidding me. That's another thing you should have told me earlier.

So, what should I do if I can't transform? And also, exactly what class is this heavy-weight Megalo? If it's in the same class as Zarii was, then that would be bad.

Well, at least there was a reliable swordsman here. She was stronger than I was.

Sera's green wings disappeared. She only had her black cloak and those two swords, and leaves no longer danced around her. Could it

be that this was her last weapon?

“Sera.”

Let’s go. Is what I tried to say, but Sera was not there, and the anteater was. In a moment, my vision blurred and I spun around. I had been knocked very quickly off my feet.

The anteater moved his feet rhythmically and was quite an impressive sight. Were anteaters this fast? Anteaters and sloths were close relatives, weren’t they?

What looked like purple vapor emitted from his fist.

Haruna had said that this was the Megalo releasing magical energy.

Ahh, I see. When Megalo got ready to fight, they released magical energy.

I heard a sound like iron striking iron as Sera’s sword made out of leaves met with the anteater’s small fist. But even if I could see the moment they connected with each other, I couldn’t follow their movements. For a zombie like me, it was impossible to follow them when they were moving so fast.

“Haruna, can you see them?”

“O-Of course! It’s not like it’s... that big of a deal!”

Her face was flushed red, and spat out that desperate denial.

“Hey, is everything alright?”

“What are you talking about?”

Haruna’s words were as reassured as ever, but her tight fists were trembling. It seemed that even now, once she was hit by that purple vapor she would become scared of Megalo. She was probably putting on a bluff right now so that Sera wouldn’t realize she was scared.

If that’s the case, I won’t push the issue.

“No, nevermind.”

As if we were watching a tennis match, our necks twisted left and right as we watched over the battle. Could I jump in and help? I can’t even follow them though...

He was much faster than Zarii had been. That heavyweight champion...

Ah, wait, I never heard if he was a champion or not.

Being able to watch Sera’s swordsmanship from the side like this really gave me a sense of how elegant and magnificent she was. Dodging her opponent’s attacks, and warding him off while slashing and slashing again. Ah, that was just a Tsubame Gaeshi, wasn’t it?

If Sera weren’t here, we probably wouldn’t be able to win.

“Ayumu. Switch with me for a while.”

She suddenly called to me, and I reluctantly came forwards. When I asked her what happened...

“My weapon disappeared. I don’t have enough blood.”

She spoke with as elegant a facial expression as always. In an instant, the sword she was holding had changed to normal tree leaves. That was a huge problem.

“OK. I’ll take over from here.”

The anteater came at me with a punch, but I somehow stood firm and took his attack. Even though I guarded with my arm, I was just struck in a different place. I was just so outclassed in terms of speed. The bones in my body broke one after the other, but because I was a zombie they soon healed. The sound of breaking bones echoed through the area a countless number of times.

Jab jab jab jab... he punched at me repeatedly. [38](#)

His left jab repeatedly gouged into my cheek.

I returned some punches while trying my best to not get sent flying. Granted, I couldn't hit him at all.

"Haruna. I have one request."

"W-What? If it's something weird, I'm going to kick you."

"I want your blood."

Haruna stiffened at Sera's very vampire-like words. Without even waiting for a response, Sera closed in on Haruna. Sure sure, meanwhile, I'm getting punched full of holes.

"Nn?! Nn.....nn...."

For some reason, Sera locked her lips with Haruna's. Haruna flushed red and struggled, but soon her body relaxed and she stopped resisting. Sera, when we get home, please do that to me. I beg of you.

Sera then pulled back, and bit into Haruna's white neck. It was like a scene right out of a vampire movie. Blood oozed out of Haruna's neck, but her face was still flushed and her eyes looked drowsy.

"Ah! ... nn... ahh..."

She looked like she was in a trance, and let out what sounded like a thirsty groan. God, looking at her made my face heat up. Sera-san, please suck my blood too. If you're fine with someone dead like me. Yes yes, I'm getting beat full of holes over here. Please don't forget that, alright?

Even while I continued to get punched, to prevent the anteater from targeting those two, I continued to attack with punches I knew wouldn't connect and attract his attention.

Let me just be frank about it and say that I can't take down this anteater. How should I go about taking an enemy down that I can't hit? It would be different if I could transform, though.

But, more importantly!

Haruna was definitely on my mind. It annoyed me to no end that I couldn't take more than momentary glances in her direction. Hey, anteater-san, you want to watch too, don't you? Just a little while is fine, so let's stop fighting.

Completely unaffected by my silent request, the anteater hit me in the face with a right, straight punch. I was knocked off my feet and hit the fence, when I remembered that this was the roof of the hospital. I lost my balance, and something pierced right through my heart. It was the same attack that I had been hit with at the very beginning.

It was the anteater's long tongue. If it were Haruna's or Sera's tongue, I would have welcomed it with open arms, but the anteater's tongue was a bit...

I slowly fell to the floor. Did that anteater's tongue have the ability to drain my strength or something?

I couldn't get up, but in front of me I saw fresh leaves flying about.

"Sorry to keep you waiting."

I heard a cold voice. And while the sound of iron striking iron once again filled the air, I crawled back to Haruna's location.

Haruna was flushed a brilliant apple red as always, and sat there while putting pressure on her neck.

"Don't look at me."

She said it softly but forcefully, so I turned my gaze back to Sera.

"Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi!"

A two-part strike from the sword in her right hand. Afterwards, she added on another strike with the sword in her left hand. It was something only a practitioner of the two-sword style could do.

The attacks left but a scratch on the anteater, who then sent out another series of sharp jabs. A single leaf sprung up and defended against them.

Watching this back and forth, attack and defense was like watching a sports match, and I felt my chest heating up.

“Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi!”

I saw a series of perpendicular sword flashes, and the anteater jumped backwards. This is really not going anywhere, wouldn't you say?

And then, the anteater made a hand seal of some kind³⁹, and thrust out both his hands. A ball of energy formed in front of his palms.

There was no doubt in my mind that this was a big move. Sera, will you be alright? In the worst case scenario, if I have to protect you, I'd like to know whether that attack is going to be a light beam or a light bullet.

I glanced at Sera.

“The secret of my blade lay not in the blade that is hidden.”

Sera stared fixedly at what the anteater was doing, and the swords in both her hands vanished. In a flurry of sound, large quantities of leaves filled the surroundings.

“Blades that fly as leaves on a tree, that is...”

The leaves all turned into large swords.

“Flying Sword, Hyakkizensatsu.”⁴⁰

The swords all attacked the anteater at once.

“Oohh...” I raised my voice in admiration.

Maybe he realized the situation he was in, but the anteater began to run away without releasing the energy he had been building up. But swords pierced his legs, his arms, and then his entire body. With incredible speed, the anteater soon looked like a pop-up pirate.⁴¹ But what flew off was not his head, but rather quantities of blood.

Sera turned her back to the anteater that had been immobilized by the swords that had pierced his body and walked back in our direction.

It seemed like it was over.

“Idiot! Why are you acting like it’s over?!”

Haruna screamed with a desperate expression.

Sera turned back to the anteater, but he was no longer there. From Sera’s chest, the anteater sent out a vicious uppercut.

I had forgotten. That when Megalo died, they turned into particles.

But what was sent flying by the anteater’s vicious uppercut was a log wearing a black cloak. It was the fundamental, strongest ninja skill, the body switching technique.

The anteater quickly turned around and went in pursuit of Sera. Had he managed to follow Sera with his eyes while she performed her body switching technique? For some reason, in the face of this anteater who was still so fast despite having been pierced by so many swords, Sera turned in the other direction.

At his opponent so suddenly turning her back on him, the anteater faltered for a second. That was probably what Sera was aiming for.

“Hiken, Ryuubi Gaeshi”⁴²

In an instant, the anteater had been split into two. I couldn’t even follow the sword flashes with my eyes.

She had performed an incredibly fast slash while turning around. Having faltered for just a second, the anteater couldn’t hope to dodge that.

Having been separated into two halves, the anteater fell to the ground and turned into particles, vanishing in the wind. Just like she had done before, Sera didn’t even glance in that direction and walked towards us.

I raised my hand up to around face level, and Sera, without a hint of a smile, gave me a high five.

Part 5

In the living room, Yuu was drinking tea and watching a variety show on television as usual.

“Was everything alright today?”

Without even moving her neck, Yuu ascertained my presence with only her eyes and gave me a single nod. It was the same tiny nod that wasn't more than a slight dip of her jaw.

Haruna had gone up to the second floor. Sera was sitting across from me under the table, fixated on the television like Yuu.

“Yuu, there's something I wanted to ask you.”

As if agreeing to my request, Yuu faced me. My voice might have sounded a bit pushy. But, I had absolutely no intention of holding that back.

“Yuu saved me that day we met, right?”

Her silver-colored hair swayed up and down. Affirmation.

“Really? You really weren't the one who tried to kill me?”

Her silver-colored hair swayed side to side. A stronger negation than usual.

“Well, after you saved me, there was still some time before I regained consciousness, right? What were you doing during that time?”

Her gauntlet-laden hand gripped the ballpoint pen tightly.

I was by Ayumu's side. = “I was together with oniichan, of course!”

“Really? ... Someone told me that you killed a member of his

family. Isn't that strange? Who should I believe? The victim, or the one who has these strange powers? Yuu, I beg you, explain to me what really happened!"

Yuu shook her head back and forth even more strongly than before. She seemed to be insisting that she had not told a lie.

"Ayumu, isn't your tone a bit too strong? Hellscythe-dono doesn't seem the type to lie."

"That's true, I may have been too aggressive. I apologize... I'm sorry. So, Sera, you be the judge then. Why is it that the victim could identify what Yuu looked like? Come on, answer me. Whose words have more credibility?"

"Ayumu, please calm down a little."

"I'm calm. And all I want is to calmly listen to the truth."

I'm not lying. = "Oniichan, please believe me!"

"I really want to believe you. So, isn't there some simple way you can prove to me that you're speaking the truth? Proof that you haven't been killing humans!"

Completely unconsciously, my voice had increased in volume. I think my mind was just in chaos. Before I could think about what I was saying, the words had already flown out of my mouth.

What managed to calm me down from my disturbed state were the tears that started flowing out of Yuu's eyes.

Tears dripped ceaselessly from Yuu's blue eyes. Proof of her sadness continued to run down her cheeks.

Once I was shown something like that, I couldn't say anything anymore.

Dammit.

"Ayumu, I'm hungry. Let's have dinner soon... I will prepare it this time. Ayumu, please go call Haruna down."

Sera glared at me. Implicitly, her words were an order for me to get away from Yuu. Agreeing with her intentions, I left the living room.

Taking deep breaths, I headed for the stairs next to the entranceway when I felt a strange sense of unease.

Hm? What was it?

... Ah, the chainsaw that usually adorned the entranceway was gone.

I went up the stairs and stood in front of one of the rooms on the second floor. This used to be my little brother's room, but as a result of my parents' and brother's honeymoon trip of indeterminate length, it was now being used by Haruna.

By the way, on the second floor there was my room, this room, and also my parent's room, which was being used by Sera. Yuu almost never set foot outside the living room, but she used my dad's study on the first floor as her room.

Tap tap. While I knocked on the door I turned the doorknob.

"Who is it?!"

"It's me. Sera wanted me to call you downstairs."

"What?! No way! Just a... wai-!"

When I tried to open the door, I felt resistance, as if someone were pulling it from the inside, but there was no way Haruna was going to win against me in a contest of physical strength.

On the other side of the door was a naked Haruna, flushed red and with her mouth open.

"Ugyahh!" Her cry almost reminded me of a seal, and her blush reached right to her ears.

Haruna's skin was white and looked quite soft... but more importantly, why the hell did she never have clothes on?!

“Didn’t I tell you to hold on?! You hentai! Eroamphitheater!”

Bam! She sent her heel fiercely into my shin. If I weren’t me, I would be writhing in pain, you know. From that one hit. Also, what the hell is an Eroamphitheater? Did you want to say Eroseo or something? Or maybe Eroseum?⁴³

The chainsaw was on the floor in the middle of the room. It seemed that she had been trying to transform into a masou shoujo and failing. She had it pretty tough too.

I see. Why was it that someone who reacted so strongly against ero things like Haruna was always naked? It was because she was practicing transforming. Even when she would appear in weird clothes when a Megalo showed up, she would unsuccessfully try to transform like just now, and would rush over while putting on whatever she could find.

“How long are you going to keep looking at me?! Get lost! Idiot! Amphitheater!”

Sending me flying with a kick, she slammed the door.

I mean, I was wrong for opening the door so suddenly, but this was my brother’s room, right? It was just from force of habit that I opened the door like that.

Well, what’s done is done... I gave a short apology to the probably blushing Haruna on the other side of the door, and signaled my intention to go downstairs and come back later.

Ah, now that I think about it, I completely forgot.

Did Haruna have some connection to the serial murder incidents?

At the very least, I needed to ask her how she knew I was stabbed to death.

“Haruna...”

“Hey, Ayumu. I... can’t take it anymore.”

A lonely sounding voice came from the other side of the door, and I leaned on the door.

... I'll wait until next time to ask then.

I didn't have a choice. After all, a girl's voice was crying out for help on the other side of the door.

"My magical power finally came back, but it's dried up again after I made those barriers... I can't transform again. The minute I become a masou shoujo, I feel like I'm the strongest person in the world, and I had hunted countless Megalo."

Ah, I understand. I understand that feeling. When I become a masou shoujo, I also feel much stronger.

"It'll come back soon. It's alright. Knowing you, it'll be alright."

"... No. It's not that I can't transform! But if I can't become a masou shoujo, I become paralyzed just by the magical energy of the Megalo! That's what I can't take!"

Haruna's voice gradually began to tremble.

I searched for the right thing to say, but any words I could think of sounded clichéd, so I opened the door.

"H-Hey! Don't open the door!"

Her eyes red, the naked girl quickly covered her face. I put my hand on top of her ahoge and tried to stroke her head, but Haruna suddenly circled her arms around my waist.

She pressed her unripened chest into me, and stuck her face into my chest, hugging me more tightly.

"Like this, you can't see my face or my body, right? This is my win..."

I see.

My hand, having lost its place, found its way in the end over

Haruna's hair.

"I'm so frustrated! Frustrated frustrated, frustrated! I want to become strong! Like Ayumu, I want to be able to fight even if I'm not a masou shoujo!"

"... From what I've heard, if you can cry without holding anything back, you'll become strong."

With her head buried into my chest, Haruna increased the tightness of her embrace.

And within my arms, the warrior began to cry.

Part 6

Fifteen minutes later.

Sera's homemade cooking was laid out in front of me.

What kind of cooking was it?

... Ugh, that's what I want to ask!!

The only thing in front of me was this black, coffee-like liquid.

It was a black liquid that had so much surface tension it wouldn't even spill out of the pot. Also, that's a pot I've never seen before. Was that something Sera had brought? Was this⁴⁴ what ninja's ate? Better question – was this actually food?

“Well, please eat.”

Being stared at by those jade-colored eyes, I tried to avoid her gaze and glanced at Yuu. Yuu wasn't even looking at the food. Maybe she had decided that what was on the table was not food?

Also, she's completely ignoring me... Ugh, I'm beat.

“Hellscythe-dono. Please eat.”

“Wait just a second! I'll eat!”

Could you really feed this stuff to a girl?!

I tried to ladle out the liquid from the pot onto my plate.

As if touched by magma, the ladle melted.

“Ayumu. You won't be able to touch this food with that kind of weak equipment.”

How strong was this thing?! Was it a monster?!

Seriously, was this food? If you knew I couldn't use the ladle, don't put it on the table in the first place!

"Wait... did you season this? To flavor it."

"Season? Do you think that kind of thing would actually have an effect on this food?"

It wouldn't have an effect? Wasn't this thing a bit too strong?!

Sera took out a suspicious-looking small strainer and scooped up the black liquid, dumping it with a *Krchh!* on the plate in front of me. Just the look of it frightened me. I couldn't see any of the ingredients – it was just a jet black colored soup.

"Ayumu. Hurry up and eat. Look, the plate is melting."

Is she telling me to put something in my body that is melting the tableware?

But, she had gone through so much trouble to cook for us. I had to eat it, right? Also, I'm already dead, so I'll be alright.

Feeling as if I was making some huge decision⁴⁵, I poured that soup into my mouth in one go... and spit it out immediately.

My mouth was in agony. That was disgusting. Even though I couldn't feel pain, I could feel a terrible tingling.

Ahh, I can't hold on anymore. Looking for water, I ran into the kitchen.

END CHAPTER 2

Chapter 3 –Nyah.





ああ、歩に嫌われてしまう。

どうして。なんで信じてくれないの？

悲しい。そんな感情を持ったら駄目なのに、とても悲しい。

いっそ全てを話してしまいたい。でも、そんなことをしたら、歩に嫌われてしまう。

セラがボウリングへいこうと言ってきた。ボウリング——球を転がし敵を殲滅するゲーム。何が面白いのかと思ったけど、そのくらいでいい。楽しすぎると、困るから。

Part 1

Today I ended up going bowling with Orito. Maybe because of the rain yesterday, today's weather was nice and cloudy, so I could go out during the day.

Oh right, after that incident yesterday Sera (of course) had to take a trip to the convenience store to buy some bento. And while we waited, Haruna whined incessantly about being hungry.

I met Orito in front of the station, and we went for a meal first. We headed for a fast-food shop near the station. The name of the shop was "Masked Nald."

Sound like something you've heard before? You're probably thinking of something different. This Masked Nald was managed by masked wrestlers, and was the only restaurant of its kind in the world.

"Welcome hello!!"

A masked wrestler was standing at the register.

We ordered the normal Masked Burger Set. Orito also ordered a Masked Shake (Mascaras⁴⁶ Vanilla) and a Masked Nugget (Beast God Thunder⁴⁷ Sauce). I was fine with just the set, so I didn't say anything else. And then...

"Would you like a mask with your order?"

He said that to me with a pushy look, but I immediately responded with "I'm fine." The set cost 536 yen (including tax), and if you added 1980 yen on top of that you could get a mask with the meal. There's no reason I would need such a random, nonsensical service.

"Really? You really don't want one?"

What a pushy shopkeeper. In that hot mask, his face closed in on mine, and he opened his eyes wide like a begging Chihuahua.

I gave a single sigh, and reluctantly bought the mask with my meal.

It was an absolutely ridiculous purchase, but those eyes were just too scary. I would much rather have been glared at. To think he

would come at me with those teary eyes...

So, we finished eating lunch and carried ourselves to the bowling alley that we had been planning to go to. Orito held the Masked Shake (Mascaras Vanilla) that he hadn't finished in his hand, and I held the mask I had bought in mine.

After finishing the registration, we borrowed shoes and chose the balls that suited each of us, beginning our various preparations. Lately, various things had been piling up in my life and the stress was building up. So let's relax and let it all out here.

"Hey, Aikawa, look next to us. Those are some really cute girls, aren't they?"

Orito was all smiles about it, so I took a glance in the direction he was looking at.

And then I quickly looked away.

"Come on!!"

Crack!

I heard a sound behind me. It was a voice I knew, along with the satisfying sound of pins falling.

"Alright! As I thought, I'm a genius. A genius bishoujo demon baroness!"

The lively girl with a swishing ahoge returned to her seat. Over there was also a girl with jade-colored eyes and an armored girl with no expression.

Yes... them.

Haruna was wearing my shirt and jeans as usual. Yuu was wearing her plate armor and gauntlets in spite of the terrible heat. Sera was in a denim skirt and a shirt with some logo on it. She was also donning accessories here and there. She really seemed like a modern girl.

Why was Haruna here? No, rather, why was Yuu here? To think that she would come to bowl... did Sera invite her?

“Oh? What’s wrong, Aikawa? You look pale.”

Well, my face gets pale sometimes. After all, I’m dead, remember? Well no, that’s not it. I just would be really bothered if it was found out that I knew the bishoujo squad over there.

Calm down. Should I count the prime numbers? One prime number, two prime numbers... was there some way I could prevent myself from getting noticed by them? Once it was my turn to bowl, I have a feeling I would get exposed in an instant.

My zombie mind was going at full speed. Then, I noticed that I was still holding the 1980 yen mask.

That was it! Without a moment’s delay, I put on the mask, and stroked down my chest in relief. With this, I was no longer “Aikawa Ayumu” but rather had become “Masked Ayumu”! Having become this Masked Ayumu, my hentai levels had tripled!

Not worried any longer that I would get exposed, I watched the three girls with Orito.

They had all bowled three frames, and Haruna had bowled strikes every time. Actually, everyone had perfect marks. They all had the same scores lined up neatly on the screen.

“Uwah, that’s an amazing score... are they pros? Those girls.”

Would pros really be practicing at a place like this? They were just not human, that’s all. Just a “masou shoujo who couldn’t transform into a masou shoujo,” just a “blood-seeking ninja,” and just a “mysterious necromancer.”

After Haruna, it was Sera’s turn. She stood straight up and picked up a ball.

“Hey Aikawa! Look at that girl, she really has style...”

Orito fixed his gaze on Sera’s hourglass figure. When I first had met

Sera, I too was fascinated by her figure.

“Here I go. Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi!”

With a beautiful form that almost stole my heart away, Sera released the ball straight and it struck the foremost pin, continuing forwards. Before long, the pins had all fallen. Alright, let me just say something here.

... That had nothing to do with Tsubame Gaeshi.

Sera turned back, and without the smallest sign of happiness returned to her seat. It was almost as if her getting a strike was the most obvious thing in the world.

And then it was Yuu’s turn. Yuu slowly swayed from side to side as she got up, and walked... no, it looked more like she was being drawn by some strong force and put her feet out to keep her balance. In that manner, Yuu tottered her way to the ball. Maybe because of her gauntlets, Yuu did not insert her fingers into the bowling ball holes, but instead held the ball with both hands. She *tap tap* taped her way forwards on tiptoe, and let go of the ball.

Thud! Roll roll roll roll roll roll roll....

The ball sloooowly rolled forwards. It tottered left and right, and struck the space in between the foremost pin and pin three. And then with a slow clackety clack, the pins fell. Before long, all the pins had fallen.

What was surprising was that Yuu then took up a small guts pose.⁴⁸ Nobody here probably noticed it, but that was definitely a guts pose. Trust me.

Relieving Yuu, Haruna flew out, and the minute the pins were set...

“Come on!!”

She threw it hard. The ball almost bounced as it easily knocked over all the pins. This was probably how the whole game had been going.

After everyone over there had finished throwing their strikes, we also began to play.

“Alright, Aikawa! We’re not going to lose to them!”

No way. They’re not normal humans, you know.

If I put too much strength into the throw, I might wreck the bowling alley, so I threw the ball softly.

The ball rolled forwards with considerable speed, and struck the pins with good force. But, one pin was left standing.

“Dammit.”

I glared at the one remaining pin. I definitely wouldn’t forgive it. I would show it who the boss was. The ball came out of the ball return and I promptly threw it again.

At my full power throw, the pin was knocked squarely away. It made an unpleasant *Clang!* sound, but I didn’t pay it any heed. It was a spare.

I took up a guts pose and returned to my seat. Orito welcomed me back with applause.

“That was terrible. Saying that you lack concentration would be an understatement.”

Orito wasn’t the one who had said that. The voice came from behind me.

When I turned around, I saw Haruna with a triumphant smile looking down at me.

“H-Hello...”

At the bishoujo who had suddenly spoken to us, Orito bewilderedly spoke back.

Haruna stared fixedly at Orito’s face like a cat that had spotted something moving, and thought for a bit while her ahoge jumped

back and forth.

“Umm... was it... Kakouton Genjou-san...?”⁴⁹

What the hell?! That’s some random historical figure! But I didn’t say anything, and without looking in her direction softly corrected her. “It’s Orito.”

“O... Oberstein?”

“Stop it with the Dry Ice Sword mania.⁵⁰ Also, who exactly are you?”

“Huh? What are you saying? Also, why the hell are you wearing that?”

I don’t want to make it seem like I know you group of superhumans over there. If it got out that I was living with you, terrible rumors would start circulating at school.

“Haruna. It’s your turn.”

Sera called out to Haruna. Nice. As I expected, Sera knows what’s going on.

Puzzled for a second, Haruna furrowed her brow and cocked her head to the side, but she soon leapt away with a smile. Phew. Thank you, ninja vampire-sama.

“She’s cute, but she’s pretty weird, isn’t she?”

Orito laughed happily next to me as he watched Haruna. Hey Orito, you were able to figure that out pretty quick. I’m really impressed.

“By the way, Ayumu. Why are you wearing that?”

Sera, I had thought that you understood the situation...

“Ha ha ha. I am not Aikawa Ayumu. I am Masked Ayumu!”

“... I see. Three times as disgusting as usual.”

Gwah!

And like that, my spirit was crushed. She didn't say a single word after that, so the effect was doubled.

"Aikawa, did you know that girl?"

"Don't be ridiculous. Why would I know someone as pretty as that?"

"I guess. Uh, but... she called you by name, didn't she?"

"Must have been your imagination. Ha ha ha."

This was useless, wasn't it? But Orito responded with a "Yeah, it must have been," and began to laugh with me... I'm glad he's such an idiot.

After finishing a game, I took a bathroom break, and when I came out of the bathroom Sera was waiting for me. She had her arms crossed and a quiet expression on her face. It seemed that she wanted to talk to me alone.

"What's wrong? Did you want something?"

"... Ayumu, it's about Hellscythe-dono, but..."

"Ahh, that was my bad. Do we still have to bring that up?"

I didn't want to think about that right now. I responded to her somewhat lightheartedly.

"... Hellscythe-dono was quite saddened by what had happened. At that time, you had no faith in Hellscythe-dono... she said something like that. Why is that?"

"I gave my reasons already, didn't I? It's because there wasn't enough information for me to believe her."

"So, was there enough information for you to doubt her? Was the other information you had obtained reliable?"

"I also wanted some believable information in order to verify that."

"The one saved cannot trust the one who saved him. I can't understand that."

"I know she's a good person. So, I want to believe her. But... honestly, I have my doubts. Because she couldn't tell me anything. Communication is the key to getting your thoughts across, right?"

I was probably making a very disagreeable face, and Sera's beautiful hand slapped me across the cheek.

"To her, words are a serious matter. You should know at least that much, shouldn't you?!"

"I don't know anything."

After I harshly spat out that response, Sera frowned, seeming confused.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I also have no idea what you're being so serious about."

"You really don't know why she doesn't speak, and why she has to make sure she kills all her emotions?"

... There was a reason? I thought it was just a preference.

"I don't know anything, so it's hard for me to think of her as trustworthy. If you know something, please tell me."

"... It is not something for me to tell. But, please just remember one thing. That in this world, there is no-one kinder than Eucliwood Hellscythe."

Sera turned her back on me, and quickly began to walk away.

You're honestly going to leave after we've come this far in this conversation? Leaving me with all these hazy feelings...

And like that, our fun bowling trip came to an end. The score was: Orito 113, me 170. Well, I was stronger, so it was easier for me to hit strikes than for normal people like Orito.

Ah, also, next to us, the girls had scored four perfect games in a row. Of course, each and every one of them had. And what's more, they were all pretty girls. So of course they drew a lot of attention. So it was fine for a ninja to stand out like this?

Also, how did they know it was me even under this mask? There was no longer any point, so I threw off the mask. If we were in a wrestling ring, this would have probably made for a pretty dramatic scene.

“Ahh, I lost. Aikawa, do you have anything you want?”

The prize was a volume of manga, was it...? Well, I don't really have much I want right now. So I refused his offer, telling him that it was enough to have had fun like this. We returned our shoes, and paying our bill, left the bowling alley.

Geez... I was all ready to go straight home, but I passed by three people who were clearly delinquents, smiling and on the prowl for cute girls, and that made me feel incredibly uneasy.

Why, you ask?

The reason was simple. Because today, there were indeed cute girls here. And judging from the situation, they might decide to go and hit on those three girls.

Was I jealous? No no.

Was I worried? Correct.

I was worried for those three shady-looking guys who had just gone into the bowling alley. Sera and Haruna... no, Yuu was the most dangerous of the three. Seriously, just try hitting on them.

In the worst case scenario, the bowling alley may very well become no more.

Haruna's high kick was at the level of a PRIDE contestant, you know?⁵¹

Sera's sword could easily cleave a man into two, you know?

Yuu had enough power to bring people back to life, you know?

Don't do it! You delinquents! Don't go in there! That is something you cannot do!

As my mind screamed out, I chased after them.

“Aikawa!”

Seeing me suddenly turn heel and run, Orito yelled out after me with a confused expression, but I responded with “I'll be back soon!” without even bothering to turn around.

Please make it in time! I sped up. Where are they?! Where are those guys right now?!

I ran around the bowling alley. But, perhaps because there was no school today, the bowling alley was filled with people. Unfortunately, I had lost sight of the delinquents. I really hope they hadn't found the girls...

I swept the bowling alley from one end to the other, and finally returned to Orito who was waiting for me at the entrance. In the end, I couldn't find them.

“Where were you going?”

“Ahh, just the bathroom.”

“Ha ha ha.” As I laughed dryly, I felt a strong attack come at me from the back that stopped my laugh cold.

“Ayumu! Buy me clothes!”

Haruna had suddenly hugged me from behind.

She seemed to be in a great mood after having bowled a perfect game. She dangled from my body heavily for a bit, and then made a quick landing. I noticed that the other two girls were also there.

“So you really did know these girls? Introduce me.”

Fiddling with his trademark pointy hair, Orito laughed. But the laugh didn't reach his eyes. I knew that laugh. He was upset that I knew bishoujo like these. Well, there's nothing that can be done about it anymore. Resigned, I began to explain the situation to him. As we left the bowling alley and headed for the department store, I carefully explained the situation to him.

As we left the bowling alley, we saw that an ambulance had arrived.

“Over here! Hurry! Those three aren't breathing! Quick!”

The bewildered-looking bowling alley employees directed the paramedics.

Ahh... as I thought.

Just in case, I asked Sera “You didn't kill them, right?” to which she responded “Of course. Vampire ninjas do not kill humans. Haruna just kicked them down.” Ahh, good good.

All's well that ends well. You delinquents... you really got off easy with just having to deal with Haruna's PRIDE-level high kick.

But... well... for some reason... it's just... well, this was just a small feeling, but...

Just a small part of me wished that something much more terrible would have happened to them.

Part 2

Those three girls had come from overseas. That's the only way I could have explained it, right?

I couldn't explain where exactly they had come from or what they had come here to do. The one thing I couldn't reveal was the truth. If I were in Orito's position, if I were told "Well, from right to left, we have a necromancer, a masou shoujo, and a ninja vampire," then all I would be able to respond with would be a "Huh?" and I would write it off as a joke. So, I decided to just explain that I didn't really know too many details about their visit here.

Of course, I definitely didn't tell him that I was living with them under the same roof.

... But even so...

"Where are you living?"

"Ayumu's house."

Haruna responded instantly to Orito's question. I didn't even have enough time to try and get a word in, let alone having enough room to change the subject or to clap a hand over Haruna's mouth.

"Aikawa, why didn't you tell me? Weren't you the one going on and on about living alone?"

Four-eyes is scary. Sorry sorry.

"Honestly, it was just so sudden and everything happened all at once. This small girl and this dignified looking girl... I just met them recently."

"I really am shocked... to think that you would keep this from me."

Orito watched me with a serious expression. I understood where he

was coming from, but if he knew about all this there was a high probability he would have gotten involved. Involved in all this violence.

“Sorry...”

“Well, you told me, so whatever. More importantly, have you done *that* yet...? You know... ecchi things...”

Orito spoke incredibly timidly. If I responded here with “yeah, we have,” then I would probably be able to get an interesting reaction out of him, but that would start a strange misunderstanding, and more importantly, I would be made into a sandbag by Sera and Haruna. I don’t mean that I would be punched. I mean I would be reduced to something that looked like a sandbag.

“If I did that I would have already been cut into pieces.”

Seeming to agree with that statement, Sera and Haruna nodded once. Perhaps he was relieved upon hearing those circumstances, but Orito put on his usual annoying smile and came with me to shop for clothes for Haruna.

Haruna was in front. Followed by myself and Orito. Bringing up the rear was Yuu and Sera as we wandered around the clothing section of the department store.

Waling in front, Haruna seemed to not be happy until she had picked up and looked at every single thing in the store.

“Ahh, that one’s cute! Look, Ayumu!”

I felt like I heard her say that a countless number of times.

Occasionally I looked behind me, and I saw that Sera also seemed like she was interested in some things and was examining some modern looking clothes. She had probably picked out what she wanted quickly and precisely. Yuu was staring off somewhere into space. Did she see a ghost or something?

“Sera, speak up if you want something, alright? I’ll buy it for you.”

“Is it really alright?” Sera averted her eyes, and allowed her confusion to show.

“Of course it’s alright. Feel free to not hold back like her.”

I pointed my thumb at the happily shopping Haruna. Even Sera’s eyes were probably drawn to that happily bouncing ahoge coming out of the top of Haruna’s head.

“But, for someone like me...”

“It’s fine, it’s fine, really.”

“But, for a servant like me...”

“Ugh, geez. Then, this is a command. Today, you should indulge yourself. If you’re my servant, you have to listen to my commands, right?”

I shrugged my shoulders while speaking to the indecisive Sera. If I didn’t do something like this, it seemed I couldn’t even give her a present.

“That’s not fair. But...”

She turned her back on me, and began to inspect the wares earnestly. Looking over her shoulder, in a small, seriously small voice, she smiled and gave me a “thank you.”

At Sera’s simple words, I felt my heart speed up to the point where I thought it would tear my chest open. It was like something had been stuck into my chest. That momentary smile, almost seeming like a blurry photograph, etched itself into my memory.

To turn words into blades like that...³⁰

I turned my eyes away and found myself making eye contact with Yuu. Her whole face was completely expressionless, the direct opposite of mine.

At that time, the hazy feelings I had before threatened to burst out from within me.

“To her, words are a serious matter. You should know at least that much, shouldn’t you?!”

I couldn’t stop thinking about Sera’s harsh words.

Agh, dammit! I took Yuu by her gauntleted hands and began to lead her away from that place.

“Hey, Aikawa! Where are you going?!”

Ignoring the dumbfounded Orito, I headed for the elevators.

“Excuse me, do you think these suit me? Haruna, the clothes over here are also pretty cute, aren’t they?”

Sera spoke up to Haruna and Orito. And then she glanced in my direction. Sera’s expression reminded me of something a mother would put on when seeing her son go outside on his own for the first time.

She was letting me talk to Yuu alone, wasn’t she? Thanks, Sera.

Part 3

Still holding Yuu's hand in mine, we silently looked up at the floor indicator above the elevator. Yuu hadn't taken her eyes off my face, but I wanted to find a quieter place to talk and just continued to look at the floor indicator.

We arrived on the roof. It was a lonely rest area with nothing but a bench and a vending machine, but you could say it was the best place for a zombie. At some point, the sun had set, and the full, dark sky seemed to reflect my mood.

Nobody else was on the roof as I sat myself down on the bench and looked up at the cloudy skies, in which not a single star was to be seen.

Like me, Yuu also sat on the bench and looked up at the sky. I could have asked her about the scenery or said something romantic, but the words just wouldn't come. I leaned both my elbows on the back of the bench, and felt myself draining of strength as if I had soaked into a warm bath. For a few seconds, I tried to find something tasteful to say, but nothing came to mind.

I changed the direction of my body to face Yuu.

"Yuu, tell me. Why do you show no emotion?"

I had put on a serious expression, but Yuu was as expressionless as ever. We met each other's gaze like that for a little bit, when Yuu closed her eyes and took out a memo pad from her skirt pocket.

You want to know no matter what?

"Yeah, no matter what."

At that time, Yuu sighed for the first time in front of me. I had no idea what she was feeling at that moment. Whether she thought it was a bother to tell me, or whether she didn't want to tell me. But

whatever she was thinking, I intended to make her tell me what was going on. I had a right to know. And if I didn't, give that right to me immediately.

She once again opened her memo pad and handed it to me, showing me a long passage.

—

The threads of fate sway from side to side and advance forwards.

Threads that overlap with each other give birth to new encounters.

When strong magical power acts on those threads, their swaying becomes larger and more violent.

Therefore, those who have strong magical power must restrain that power.

My magical power cannot be restrained.

Whether I am excited or nervous, the movements of my heart will quickly throw my magical power into chaos.

That is why it is not allowable for me to show emotion.

—

It was harder than I thought it would be to understand. In other words... how should I put it...?

“Umm. So if you cry or laugh, you change people's fate?”

She nodded. It was a sad, slow nod.⁵² At that time, I remembered the time we had met each other. That time, Yuu had told me this:

That was funny.

So, don't do it again.

In other words, she wanted me to stop doing what I was doing

because it was stirring up her emotions.

I cannot speak. Because my words are infused with power.

Those who hear my words. They become just as I say. They cannot help it.

So, I will not allow myself to speak.

“Those who hear your words become just as you say...?”

Yuu once again turned her memo pad towards me and began to write.

If I say cold, whoever hears it will feel cold even if he stood in the middle of a fire.

“That’s... really amazing!”

Yes. My words. They are too heavy.

I do not know when, or which words will become filled with this power.

So, I will not say even a single word.

“I mean, that’s a bit strange, isn’t it? It’s not like something bad is going to happen if you just say something like ‘ahh’ or ‘ohh’ or ‘nyahh.’”

I cannot. When my words become filled with power, a sharp pain runs through my head. I do not want to go through that anymore.

For using great power, there was a great price to pay... something like that then? If the price for using such a strong power like that was pain, it must be an immense amount of pain.

“So because you have that much power, people are after your life?”

There is more.

Seriously? There’s more?

In my hands I hold the power to heal. In my blood is the power of eternal youth. And my heart releases enormous amounts of magical energy.

My thoughts gradually became more and more hectic. I thought I would understand the situation after listening to her, but to think it would have the opposite effect...

“Umm... so, would I be right in saying that you don’t take off your gauntlets or plate armor to seal that power?”

Correct.

She gave me a bit of applause and her gauntlets rattled.

“Do you have anything else? Like, being able to break apart mountains, or stopping time, or becoming invincible or something?”

My special abilities are just that.

And these powers are not tied to my will.

Even should I die, these powers could probably be activated.

So, there are those who would like to kill me. To obtain my body.

“So if they killed you and used your blood, they could make an elixir of youth or something?” I had intended that as a joke, but...

They could.

Her gauntlets rattled. They could?! ...It couldn’t be that she was the one who made the vampire ninjas, could it?

“Who is trying to take your life? Only the ninja vampires? The megalos?”

I cannot say for sure. I have almost died at the hands of vampire ninjas, megalos, and masou shoujo before.

Haah. I let out a single sigh, and headed for the vending machine

close by. I bought two colas, and passed one to Yuu. But she didn't show any signs of drinking it, and set it on the bench.

“So, is there anything else you're hiding?”

I told you everything. You must ha-

Her words cut off right there. Something began drip dripping onto the memo pad.

You must hate me now, right? Those words were terribly hard to make out on the pad.

As for me, I could not even begin to understand how she had arrived at that conclusion.

“Are you saying that I hate Yuu?”

She quickly shook her head. Those big eyes of hers filled with tears.

If my feelings leak out, Ayumu's fate, because Ayumu is closest to me, would be the most affected.

I see. Certainly, even though Yuu had been emotionless up until now, lately I've seen her cry and she's shown various emotions. And together with that, the megalo and vampire ninjas and masou shoujo had been showing up on our doorstep all at once.



So what? Did she really think that I would hate her just because of that?

For a monster like me to be next to you. Now that you know

what I am, don't you hate me?

Yuu's doll-like demeanor began to crumble. Wrinkles formed across her brow, and she cowered in despair.

"Monster? Where do you see someone like that? From what you told me, the only person that I see here is a kind girl."

Is it really alright for me to stay with you?

"Yeah, just do whatever..."

For some reason, I was incredibly angry at myself for responding in such a cold way. I let out the breath I was holding with a "Haah..."

Just do whatever? What the hell was I saying? Those words weren't even close to expressing what I was feeling right now. I have to choose my words to get my feelings across properly.

"Yuu, whenever you want to laugh, just go ahead and laugh. That changing fate stuff... I'll just figure out how to deal with that. So, please stay with me."

Yuu's tears didn't stop. At this point, I couldn't think of anything but to stroke her head, couldn't think of any way of cheering her up other than placing my hand on top of her silver hair.

Until her tears stopped, I couldn't help but have my fill of her silky hair.

Well, if what Yuu said was correct, I could expect a lot more trouble to be coming my way.

But let it come. Whether it was the great King of Terror⁵³ or a nuclear warhead, I would face whatever came.

It was a cheap price to pay to be with Yuu.

Part 4

The girls bought a plentiful amount of shoes and whatever, and of course I had to hold them as we returned home. Being surrounded by bishoujo, Orito seemed quite pleased. On parting, he made clear to me that I definitely had to bring the girls the next time we went bowling.

“Hah... I’m beat! This world isn’t bad, is it?! It’s not just something I would throw away!”

As soon as she got back home, Haruna plucked the things I was holding away from me and leapt up the stairs.

She was probably going to start a little personal fashion show in her room.

“Wait, Haruna! Put these on! Naked if you could... no, with a maid outfit!”

As I chased Haruna up the stairs, I took out a nekomimi⁵⁴ hair band. Of course, I had mittens shaped like paws too~~!

“You hentai! You Erobone Vanguard!”⁵⁵

“Wha, This isn’t Cosmo Babylonia or somethi-“⁵⁶

Cutting me off, she quickly moved behind me and with a reverse frankensteiner⁵⁷, sent my head flying into the floor of the entranceway. She would have definitely looked cute in nekomimi though...

“Don’t be so rowdy please! It’s a bother.”

As if she had her feelings hurt by Sera’s words, Haruna violently ascended the stairs. I headed for the living room with Yuu to wipe off the blood that was flowing from my nose. Gotta get a tissue.

“...”

Alone, Sera gazed fixedly at the mirror that was decorating the

entranceway. I secretly watched her to figure out what she was doing, when surprisingly, she picked up the nekomimi hair band and put it on.

“..... Nyah.”⁵⁸

She faced the mirror and took up a pose. Then, perhaps getting embarrassed, she quickly took the hair band off and threw it away from her.

What a charming thing to see. I had bought it to see if I could get Haruna to wear it, but I was fully satisfied with just this. I began to call out to Sera, but then decided that it was probably better if I pretended I never saw that.

Well, she let me see something nice, so maybe we'll have pizza tonight...

Part 5

“Hooray!!”

Seeming more excited than I would have expected her to be, Haruna jumped her ahoge back and forth.

Seafood and fried shrimp pizza filled the table from end to end. There was another extra serving of the same thing next to where I was sitting. But we still might not have had enough. Haruna and Yuu both ate absurd amounts of food.

“It’s been a while since I’ve had alfredo ganahson L.⁵⁹ Itadakimaasu~.”⁶⁰

Haruna gazed at the shrimp-and-mayonnaise pizza with a sparkle in her eyes. She quickly grabbed a slice, and brought it to her mouth. Also, al... what? Huh? Gana... what? What was that?

“Hm?”

Having stuffed her cheeks with a bite of the pizza, Haruna cocked her head to the side as her ahoge bounced back and forth.

“This isn’t alfredo ganahson L at all!”

Her eyes widened and she stood up. She seemed strangely excited.

“What exactly is that al- whatever you thought it was?”

“Eh? Thinly spread out alfredo with a generous helping of ganahson on top, and a sprinkling of melted L... ah! Is that not something you eat in this world?”

Sounded like a recipe or something.

“I don’t think we do.”

“I see... that’s right. There’s no reason such a crap world like this

would have things like alfredo or ganahson.”

Suddenly disheartened, Haruna sunk back into her seat. She then bit into the shrimp-and-mayonnaise pizza that she still held in her hand.

“Ah, but this is good. So this will do.”

Oh, is it good?! Is it alright for you?!

Strength seemed to return to Haruna’s drooping ahoge, and one by one she ate through pieces of pizza. A smile appeared on her face. Yuu was eating with her usual complete lack of expression. And now look, the pizza disappeared in an instant, didn’t it? Was it sucked up? Looking at their small mouths chewing and chewing, I knew exactly where the pizza had disappeared to.

“Ayumu... when you ordered me to indulge myself, is that order still in effect?”

The only person who had not touched the pizza softly called out to me. I could see a bit of bewilderment under her usually piercing expression, so I asked her what was wrong.

“I’ve never had anything other than traditional Japanese fare. It’s a bit embarrassing to say, but... I’m a bit frightened by food like this. Won’t you make me some miso soup?”

Returning back to her usual, tidy expression, Sera spoke just as tidily. I just had one question here.

Never had anything other than traditional Japanese fare? Are you telling me that the cooking you made for me before, that invincible cooking on which neither seasoning nor tableware had any effect... that was traditional Japanese fare?

“Just try a bit. It’s really good, you know. It’s not like it’s poisoned or anything.”

I passed a piece of pizza to Sera. She stared at it with a grimace, but perhaps she seemed to come to a decision...

“A vampire ninja should fight without fear no matter what type of enemy appears.”

Persuading herself, she shut her eyes tight and resolutely took a bite. She opened her eyes and took another. She cocked her head to a side and took another, and began to eat.

“This is quite incredible. To think that it would be this...”

She really seemed pleased. At this rate, the pizza would be gone in the blink of an eye. As I thought, it didn’t seem like we would have enough.

A lively meal. A mealtime that really made me feel happy. I can say it without any embarrassment now... I really enjoyed being with these people.

“Ahh~, Pizza’s really quite something. Ayumu, let me use your cell phone.”

Haruna rolled around, sprawled on the floor, and held out her hand to me.

“Here you go.”

I handed her my cell phone, and she dialed out. It was a regular report back to her world.

Riiiiinnngg.... Riiinnnnng.... Riinnnnng.

“Ah, is this Dai-sensei? Eh? Ah, I see. Well, please tell her that refrain-year, rising-class attendance number 634526379 Haruna-chan called.”

How many people were in her class?!

I wanted to say that, but it’s not like I could do that when Haruna looked so down. Well, it’s not like I would say it even if things were normal.

“Was she... not there?”

“They told me that she left for another world to gather research materials.”

She threw herself heavily onto the table and shut her eyes. Hey, are you going to sleep there or something?

“Haah... I can’t find any artifacts, I can’t become a masou shoujo, and I can’t call Dai-sensei... this is the wooorst.”

All the energy she had before seemed to have drained out of her. Her mood was seriously more fickle than the weather on top of a mountain.

“By the way, Haruna. What’s an artifact? I’ll also help look for them.”

“Hmph. Someone like you wouldn’t be able to find them.”

“But, it’s still better than just looking for them alone, right? What’s the name of the artifact?”

Haruna had been frowning, but she suddenly put on a sincere, shoujo-like expression.

“Hmm, I guess that’s true. Yes, that’s certainly true, I think. Umm... the name was... Kyoudou... umm. Kyoufu... yes. The name was Kyoufu.⁶¹”

Kyoufu? What was up with that terrifying name? I mean, could terror actually have a solid form?

As she said, it really probably wasn’t something I would be able to find.

“Is that something that has a physical form?”

“Of course! It’s like this, square and soft.”

She gestured with her hands, but I still didn’t understand. It didn’t seem to be something that was very big. Did Sera know what she was talking about? I asked, but Sera shook her head from side to side. What about Yuu? ... Ah, she’s ignoring me.

“Well, if I happen to see something like that, I’ll tell you.”

“I’m not holding my breath.”

Haruna once again collapsed onto the table.

Part 6

Ding Dong!

The doorbell rang, and with an “I’m coming!” I stood up. When I opened the door, I saw a man standing there, wearing a trench coat and a hat in spite of this stifling heat.

“Hello, my name is Kerberos Wansard.”

He took off his hat, and underneath was the head of a black dog. It seemed like the head of a Doberman, with a long nose and very little fur.

Could it be that he was here because Yuu had let out emotions? And had changed my fate?

“What do you want?”

“I am the guardsman of the underworld... ah, and don’t say ‘oh, how can you be a guardsman if you’re a dog?’ I guess you could call me a guardsdog or something... right?”

Even if you say “right?” I’m not going to bite. Just get on with it.

“Although, even though I call myself a guardsman my role is somewhat the opposite... I let anyone in who comes, but don’t let anyone out. Of course, it’s because it’s the underworld... yes. You came to the underworld once but then you returned back here, right? So I thought I would come over here and devour you.”

“In other words, you came here to return me to the underworld?”

“Ah, so you understand? I’m thankful that you understood so quickly. Well then...”

He ripped into my shoulder. Kerberos... no, I’m just going to call this thing “dog.” The dog bit right through my shoulder. He tore

through my shoulder as easily as if he was eating a piece of bread. I kicked the dog with 310% power, and ran back into the house.

Because of the gaping wide hole in my shoulder, I couldn't move my arm. Putting pressure on my tattered shoulders as my arms swang side to side, I ran towards the living room.

Yuu had the power of healing. It would take time for a wound this terrible to heal on its own. So I would ask her to heal it.

“Yuu! Sorry. This is a bit a sudden, but heal me!”

When I told that to the necromancer who was watching television in the living room, she didn't even look my way and pulled in her chin. I sat next to Yuu, and showed her my wound.

Yuu took off the gauntlet she was wearing on her left hand, and touched her pale, snow-like hand to my chest. Just with that, the blood stopped flowing from my shoulder, and it was healed.

Ooohh, so that's the power of healing... amazing. She didn't even have to touch the wound.

“You're being quite stubborn, Aikawa-san. Please just die. Right away-“

The dog stepped foot into the living room. Sera watched the dog carefully with her crimson eyes, and Haruna bounced up from her collapsed position on the table. With an expression of shock...

“The dog talked!”

What? The Megalo also talked, didn't they? Like that crustacean thing.

“Oh? I was just thinking that it's been a while since I've seen you, and you've been here? Hellsythe-sama... ah, I see. This was your doing, wasn't it? It must have been. There's no reason a normal human would be able to escape from the underworld, yes. Come on, tell me.”

For some reason, the dog sat down, and we all sat around the table.

Oh? Was the battle already over?

As everyone sat around the table with puzzled expressions, Yuu picked up the ballpoint pen that had been thrown by the table and wrote something on her memo pad.

Tap tap.

I forgot. = “Teehee. Yuu forgot! Sorryyy.”[62](#)

“Well, I guess this was a wasted trip, then. How bothersome. You really should have told us before you called his soul back to him. If I knew this was your doing, I wouldn’t have come in the first place...”

The dog shook his head in a resigned manner. I had no idea what was going on... for now, there was one thing I had to figure out.

“So, you’re not going to fight with me anymore?”

At my question, the dog put on a strangely refreshed expression.

“I won’t. This is something Hellscythe-sama did, right? She can do anything she wants. Even the kings of the underworld kneel before Hellscythe-sama. It’s just... hmm... how do I put it... she’s quite amazing.”

“Yuu’s that amazing?” I muttered, and the dog continued to speak.

“Yes. ‘The Center of Everything,’ the kings of the underworld call her.”

The Center of Everything, huh? It was clear that Yuu was an incredibly important person, but it’s not like that mattered to me... it did really weigh on my mind though.

“But more importantly, this has been bothering me, yes. The wound on your shoulder from before was pretty serious, yes? Could it be... well, I’m sorry if this is false, but could it be that you made Hellscythe-sama use her abilities?”

I heard a *tap tap*.

It's alright. The pain is bearable.

Pain... ah, I had completely forgotten. In exchange for using her abilities, she had to suffer through pain. A headache, I think...

The dog sighed with an "I knew it," and punched me across the face.⁶³

What the hell... before I could object, the dog began to speak. He seemed to understand what I had wanted to say by my expression.

"Hellscythe-sama holds in her hands the power to heal things. It is the power to fix a target object wherever she wants it to be healed by just touching it."

"Hmmm, that's amazing beyond my expectations. She can fix anything?"

Quite out of character, Haruna seemed interested.

"But, in return, she must bear the pain that she heals."

"So you mean, just now, Yuu took on the pain of getting her shoulder torn apart?"

"Precisely. Because of you, Hellscythe-sama is feeling pain, you know? I know how much pain Hellscythe-sama has come to feel through the use of her abilities. That is why I punched you."

"Yuu, I'm sorry. You really should have told me that you would go through this."

I don't mind. = "It's fine! It was for my oniichan, after all!"

At that one word, the dog's round eyes became even rounder, and he lightly opened his mouth while gazing at Yuu.

"Is that... right? Ah, I really must be returning home soon. I apologize for the inconvenience this time... ah, there are some humans being killed near here, so maybe I'll take their souls with me and leave."

“Wait just a second! I can’t just overlook what you said about people being killed near here!”

“Why is that? It’s a murder that has nothing to do with all of you, though? Could it be you want to help the humans? Could it be...?”

It wasn’t just that I wanted to help them.

There were people being killed near here? The one who was trying to kill them was probably...

The one who had killed me!

Part 7

I flew through the nighttime city with the dog. This was a very personal matter, so the other three hadn't come with me.

Nighttime sure is great. I could use my full strength. Underneath the sun, I very well might lose in a fight to an elementary school student.

"It's nearby... yes. It seems there is still someone alive in there though."

The dog descended in front of what seemed like an incredibly unremarkable house. He opened the second-floor window and we infiltrated the building.

"... It seems I was beaten. The soul is no longer here."

"What do you mean? Did the person die?"

"I came here to collect the soul to send back to the underworld, but it seems that the soul has already disappeared. These types of things have been happening quite often lately... yes. Souls that don't reach the underworld even after the person dies."

"So, where do they go?"

"They were probably sacked."

"Sacked?"

"Sacrificed. It's an abbreviation. This is just hearsay, but people say that if you offer souls to this King of the Night person, you can receive an immense amount of magical energy. It's been happening quite often lately... yes."

We timidly exited the room, and descended the stairs. It still just looked like a normal house. Did a bizarre murder really take place

here? It was so quiet that I had my doubts.

But, when we got down to the first floor, we saw all the blood.

“Aikawa-san, be on your guard.”

The dog had gone ahead of me, and wiped his forehead with the sleeve of his trench coat. This dog... he was sweating.

Well, I was sweating too. I could feel an intense pressure from whoever was ahead of us. The thumping of my heart sped up, and a chill ran down my spine.

That person was here. That terrifying person.

“Oohh, the magical energy is steadily going up... yes. To think that there would be someone in the human world with this much magical energy... I see! Quite!”

I had no idea what he was so impressed about. I wish I could sense magical energy too...

In the darkness, I spied a flash of light.

Bam. My body was pushed to the side, and in front of my eyes I saw the dog's outstretched hands. Hey hey, I'm the one who can't die here. Let me be the shield. You go stand off to the side.

“Why the hell are you protecting *me*?!”

“... If something happened to you, Hellscythe-sama would be sad, right?”

“I'm fine. I'm-“

“Hellscythe-sama really looked like she was happy... I won't allow myself to snatch that away from her.”

At that moment, the dog looked almost human to me. He really seemed to care for Yuu.

“Please hurry up and run away! With your level of magical energy,

this is out of the question! This person, this world...”

That large body tumbled backwards and collapsed onto mine. In the darkness, new blood fell to the floor.

I couldn't move. I wanted to get out in front of the dog as soon as possible to pay my respects to this person, but I couldn't move at all.

All I could see was the blade of a sword.

With a single stroke, my body was cut in half from the chest down. The dog in front of me also suffered the same fate.

My body still couldn't move.

Move, move dammit, move. My mind was spinning as usual. There was nothing to be afraid about this time around. But even so, my body couldn't move. Just like that time when I had been killed.

At the very least, I wanted to see this person's face.

I needed just a bit more time, but my vision suddenly blurred. The dog had thrown the upper half of my body. With quite a bit of force, I crashed through the wall and exited the building.

Once I went outside, my body began to move again, as if it had all been a bad dream. I desperately crawled along the ground and went back into the house. I didn't know what the dog had felt that caused him to force me away. But, I was in no mood to run away. I was just that helpful of a guy.

Inside, the dog was collapsed onto the floor. In that blood-splattered hallway, the dog's body had been cut into two. No, cut into three. His head had been chopped off, although it was nowhere to be seen.

I attached the lower half of my body, and staggered into the house's interior.

I saw a small, severed hand on the floor. A young boy? Or maybe a girl?

A large body was there also. It was probably that of the master of the house. I found a total of four bodies scattered about on the floor. Ah, I guess that would be five bodies, counting the dog's. But, the one I was looking for was nowhere to be found.

“So, what exactly were you trying to tell me?”

Returning to the dog, I sat down in the sea of blood and looked down at his tragic remains.

”This person, this world...”

If only he had been able to add one more syllable, I probably would know what he meant. To this world? This world's? In this world?

But now there was no response.

Like dandelion fluff, the dog's body dissolved into small, white particles and flew away. It was the same as when a Megalo died...

You really did something unnecessary...

And... well... in the end, you really weren't such a bad person.

Hm? It was the same as when a Megalo died...

What? The Megalo also talked, didn't they? Like that crustacean thing.

I remembered my own thoughts from before. Then, underneath the dissolving trench coat, I saw the distinctive mark of the Megalo, that black schoolboy's uniform.

The dog was... Kerberos Wansard was a Megalo.

He had said that he was a guardsman for the underworld. In other words, were Megalo entities that came from the world of the afterlife?

Why did a Megalo help a masou shoujo like myself? Why hadn't Haruna made a move before when they were together in the same room?

Why did a Megalo know Yuu?

And finally... why was he a good person?

Part 8

Brrr brrr.

On the way back home, my cell phone began to vibrate. When I took it out, I saw that it was from an unknown number. I thought it was going to be someone soliciting money or something, but I had time before I got home, so I decided to pick up.

“Hello?”

“Oh~? This isn’t Haruna, is it~?”

The voice that I heard from the other side of the line was the easygoing, cute voice of a girl.

“Haruna? Oh... could it be that this is Dai-sensei?”

There was only one person who could have had business with Haruna.

“Indeed~. And you are~?”

“I’m Aikawa Ayumu, the person who’s acting as a masou shoujo in Haruna’s place.”

“But, you aren’t a shoujo at all, are you~?”

I heard a chuckle from the other end. You’re absolutely right there.

“Trust me, I’ve been aware of how ridiculous it is for a while... no, from the very beginning. By the way, did you need Haruna for something? She’s not nearby right now, so would you like me to take a message?”

“Ahh~. Please do then~~. Could you tell her that she can stop looking for the kyoudoufu, [64](#) and for her to please just concentrate on recovering her magical power~?”

“Kyoudoufu?”

“Yes. It was the errand I tasked Haruna with~~. It really seems she can’t find any no matter what, so if that’s the case, I guess she can stop looking~~.”

At her words, I stopped walking, completely dumbfounded. The thing she had been looking for was “kyoudoufu.” Square and soft kyoudoufu. Not kyoufu, but kyoudoufu. I really could see Haruna making that mistake. She seriously can’t even do a simple errand like that? ... Pretty cute.

“Ah, in that case, shall I get some for you?”

I began to walk again and proposed that idea.

If I recall correctly, Kyouko-chan’s grandfather lived in Kyoto. Why do I remember that, you ask? Because a cute girl had told me, of course. Also, why exactly did she send Haruna to Tokyo in search for Kyoudoufu? Shouldn’t she have gone to Kyoto?

“Ah, if that’s possible, please do. I really do love kyoudoufu~~.”

“Ahh. But then, why did Haruna come to Tokyo? Shouldn’t she have gone to Kyoto?”

“Oh oh~? You aren’t in Kyoto~? I told her to go to Kyoto though~?”

... Could she seriously have confused Kyoto with Tokyo? To...
kyoto...[65](#)

“Ohh, that girl~... this is why she can’t keep up in school...”

I heard her sigh. I mean, even if you say that to me, it’s not like I can apologize for her.

“She says she’s a genius, though.”

I mumbled that while smiling. I had meant it as a joke, but...

“That’s certainly true. I’ll admit that she’s a genius~.”

Who the hell are we talking about?! ... But you said she couldn't keep up in school. She's a genius?

"She's a genius, so she can't keep up in school~~."

Dai-sensei spoke in a very laid-back tone.

"That girl is hiding quite a large amount of talent. She understands things very quickly, and can then put them into practice. But but~, everything came too easily for her, and she stopped taking interest in anything. She just didn't seem to care anymore~, and at some point she even stopped coming to school. Ah, kyoudoufu definitely goes well with ginger, doesn't it?"

Afterwards, Dai-sensei continued to talk in her laid-back fashion. At some points, she diverted the conversation to tofu, but here's a summary of what she said:

Even if you're a genius, if you don't learn anything you'll still have a hard time.

So, she was left behind. She was confident that if she wanted to, she could catch up, but that pride had the opposite effect, and even now she didn't care about learning the basics.

Her attitude annoyed the people around her, and nobody got close to Haruna. If she had just one friend, if she had just one rival, she might have been more motivated and ambitious.

But, that girl took the path of loneliness.

Because she was a genius, she couldn't keep up in school.

And then, her attendance numbers were lacking, so at this rate she would be held back a grade.

So Dai-sensei suggested that she hunt for Megalo, so that she could earn school credit without attending class. And while she was journeying to our world as a masou shoujo, she should take the opportunity to bring back some tofu from Kyoto.

Haruna couldn't remember the name, not because she was an idiot,

but just because she didn't see the point. She wasn't interested in it, so she didn't feel the need to remember it.

For example, Zarii and Kumacchi, Shironaga etc... she had just made up those names, and those Megalo had a different set of names. In reality, the bear was Maeshiba, the crayfish was Manabe, the whale was Maesowa, the anteater was Doki... they all had had unconventional last names like that, the reason being that it made them easy to tell apart... but honestly, I thought it had the exact opposite effect and made things harder to understand. Ah, oh right. The AA-rank and whatever that Haruna had mentioned seemed to match each time. So she probably was interested in that aspect at least.

"It's just that, lately there have been some reaaaaaally surprising things happening."

"Surprising things...?"

"Yeah. She managed to remember one person's name, it seems. Even though she can't even remember my name."

Now that I think about it, I've called her nothing but Dai-sensei up until now.

"Exactly what kind of spell did you cast on her? Ayumu-san?"

As she chuckled, Dai-sensei called my name.

"I may know all kinds of magic, but I know of no magic that can open that girl's heart. You must be quite an amazing magician~."

For some reason, receiving the half-joking compliment from the great Dai-sensei made me blush, and I found myself at a loss for words. Looking for a way to change the subject, I tried asking the question that had popped up just a little while ago.

"What exactly are the Megalo? I thought they were the enemies of mankind, but--"

"Megalo are the enemies of masou shoujo~. If we leave even one alive, our world won't have a future~."

Haruna also had said a similar thing earlier. So that wasn't just her personal opinion, but was something all masou shoujo thought?

“Earlier, a Megalo was present, but Haruna didn't realize it, and the Megalo also didn't go for her. Why was that?”

“That's quite unusual~... this is just a guess, but could it be that the Megalo was there for some other reason~? Megalo have an ability to detect masou shoujo~. And then, we have the ability to backwards detect when they use their ability. So if that Megalo wasn't aiming to attack masou shoujo, Haruna wouldn't be able to detect it... that's quite plausible, yes~? Haruna never learned how to detect magical energy, so it is quite possible that she didn't realize it even though the Megalo was right in front of her~.”

She chuckled half-jokingly. I see. That “other reason” was probably that he had come to see me.

After that, we talked a while more about what masou shoujo did, and we ended the phone call when I arrived in front of my house. It seemed that she had told me everything she had wanted to tell Haruna. Haruna sure seemed to have a good teacher back in her world.

Well then, let's also send an email to Kyouko-chan. “Give me tofu, please,” or something like that.

Part 9

For some reason, when I went home, Sera's face was pale. The beauty of her gloomy expression almost sent shivers down my spine... but was everything alright?

"I need blood... could you call Haruna over for me?"

Sera's entreaty came out in a voice reminiscent of the buzzing of a mosquito. If you want to know, vampire ninjas needed to drink blood every now and then or they would die. But when they were well-supplied with blood, they were almost as hard to kill as I was.

"You can't just use mine?"

"... That would be unpleasant."

"I... see..."

Even in an emergency, you don't want to drink a zombie's blood?

For now, I ran up the stairs for Sera's sake and headed for Haruna's room. I knocked twice, and heard the heavy sounds of someone walking. I hurriedly put my hands on the doorknob.

"Hey! Don't come in! Don't you dare come in!"

I opened the door with all my might, and Haruna came flying out of the room. Today, she had just one pair of panties on. She managed to put on panties in that short of a time? Tch, disappointing.

"You damn eroboros!"

"Now that one I don't get at all..."

"It's a snake!"

Ahh, Ouroboros.⁶⁶

“Well, whatever, but Sera’s in bad shape. Can’t you give her some blood?”

“I don’t want to! Deeeeeeeeeefinitely do. not. want. to! Hey! Don’t look at me!”

Her face flushed red, Haruna confined herself back into her room. No matter how many times I see it, her skin sure is beautiful... but now was not the time to be thinking about that. What should I do? Should I force her downstairs?

For now, I returned to the living room, where Sera was now laying on her side. “Are you sure you don’t want my blood?” I asked.

“I don’t want to. I deeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeefinitely don’t want to.”

She elongated that word even more than Haruna had...

Tap tap. Sera and I faced the desk from where we had heard the tapping sound.

My blood should be no problem. = “Yuu’s blood is fine, right? I’ll do my best!”

“That’s...! I can’t just take Hellscythe-dono’s blood...”

“Come on, Yuu said it was fine, so just accept her blood this once.”

A look broke out on Sera’s face, almost as if she had just drunk a bitter cup of tea. She put her bent index finger to her mouth, and after thinking for a bit, faced Yuu resolutely.

“Well, let me take advantage of your kind offer then. Thank you very much.”

Sera reluctantly walked over to Yuu, and just like she had done with Haruna, she took Yuu’s lips in a kiss.

Yuu stood there without an expression, and didn’t even blink. Sera confirmed that Yuu’s eyes had thinned a bit, and then bit into Yuu’s neck.

“... Ah.”

With a speed I had not seen her exhibit up until now, Yuu clapped both her hands on her mouth. And if that weren't enough, she also shut her eyes tight. Was that just her voice right now? It was the first time I had heard it. Did it hurt? She looked like she was blushing though.

After she finished sucking Yuu's blood, Sera suddenly kowtowed to Yuu.

“Really, I'm very very sorry!”

Her flush fading, Yuu gave a fleeting nod, and after that moment turned back to the television and her usual posture.

“That probably means she forgives you.”

Even though I told her that, Sera still seemed uneasy. She continued to watch Yuu, but Yuu paid her gaze no heed. Oh right, there was something I had to ask Yuu.

“Yuu, about the dog from before... he was a Megalo, right?”

Yuu faced me and gave me a slight nod.

“So, you come from the Megalo side then. Can you transform into one of those monsters as well?”

Yuu poured tea slowly down her throat and turned her body towards the table. It seemed that she was willing to talk about this with me.

In the underworld, there are people who live there just like people live on this world. I am nothing more than one of those people.

“In other words, you don't have a monster form.”

She nodded strongly.

But, there also exist those who have that power.

I see, so there were people who had unusual abilities just like Yuu. As expected from the underworld. It really did seem like a place of devils and demons.

“What exactly are Megalo?”

In the underworld, to oppose the masou shoujo, souls of the departed are gathered. They are then inserted into the body of animals and are allowed to grow. That is the Megalo System.

“People who die in this world become Megalo?”

Not just this world. All souls of those who have died gather in the underworld. In the underworld, there are people who have that ability.

People who die become Megalo... hold on a second. Then, what does that make a zombie? I thought that a zombie was just someone who had died but still could move, but could it be that a zombie was a Megalo?

Ayumu is not a Megalo. Ayumu’s soul is being held together with my power.

I see. Megalo had to have died, but I had not died. So, I was similar but not so similar to Megalo. So I was really a zombie? I guess I could breathe easy then?

The white particles that the Megalo dissolved into after they died were probably their souls breaking apart.

“Yuu, don’t you consider Haruna an enemy then? Why didn’t you say anything?”

Haruna is just a poor girl who has lost her powers. She poses no threat.”

In other words, Haruna had lost her powers, so Yuu didn’t really pay her any heed.

“Sera, do you have any connection with the Megalo?”

“Unfortunately, I do not even follow what you two are talking about.”

So, vampire ninjas had nothing to do with Megalo. Well, even if they got involved in the battle between masou shoujo and Megalo, the masou shoujo could just manipulate their memories, so they wouldn't even notice.

“But, even though I didn't say anything... you just jumped in and helped take out the whale and the anteater, remember?”

“Since ancient times, I have taken on the mission of protecting humans from demons.”⁶⁷

Demons, huh? Those legendary breed of monsters may have just been another name given to the Megalo.

“Yuu, are you really alright with this? From here on out... Haruna and I are probably going to continue to exterminate the Megalo.”

I don't mind. It's not as if I am that fond of the Megalo System. Dead souls should be left in peace.

So, Yuu hated Megalo? Could it be that the Megalo System also had something to do with why she had come to this world from the underworld?

Geez... today was certainly pretty eventful. It really felt like a long day.

Brbrbrrrrr. Brbrbrrrrr.

I felt my pocket vibrate. When I took out my cell phone, I saw that I had received an email. It was from Kyouko-chan. It was a cute email filled with emoticons.

In summary, her grandfather was coming to visit her tomorrow, and she told me that she had gotten him to bring some Kyoudoufu with him. That he probably would leave to go back home just around the time school ended. She really pulled through for me. Thanks, Kyouko-chan. Now, Haruna may be able to finally finish her mission.

I went back to my room and dove into bed. Ah, right. I should probably tell Dai-sensei about the tofu. I took out my phone, and dialed her number through my call history.

Rinngggggg. Rinnggggggggg. Rinngggggg.

“Thank you for calling. This is the Matelis Magical Academy, Elusu speaking.”

The pretty sound of a girl’s voice rang in my ears. It was a voice filled with life that put my heart at ease. But, it wasn’t the voice of Dai-sensei.

“Ah, umm... could I speak with Dai-sensei?”

“Huh? I’m sorry, but who is that?”

“Ah, umm... the person in charge of Haruna from Refrain Year, Rising Class.”

I’m relieved that the name of her year and class were easy to remember. The names really gave off a strong impression. Although, don’t expect me to remember her attendance number.

“In that case, could you be talking about her homeroom teacher Ariel-sensei? Ariel-sensei has stepped away at the moment, would you like me to take a message?”

“Ah, well, umm... just tell her that I will get what she wanted tomorrow...”

“Understood. Could you please provide me with your name?”

“Ah... My name is Aikawa Ayumu.”

“Aikawa Ayumu-sama, is it? Understood. Was that all for today? Well, thank you for your call. Goodbye.”

Yes. Ah, yes. Yes. Yes. Goodbye.

I couldn’t really respond in a less monotonous way. If you ask me why, it’s because I was nervous.

Well now, it's been a while since I've been to a convenience store and browsed through some of the magazines, so shall I do that?

Why am I not sleeping, you ask?

Well, more than any animal, zombies are creatures of the night.

END CHAPTER 3

Chapter 4 – Die



ハルナに出会い、セラと出会い、メガロを倒す日々。これら全てはユーのせいだったのかもしれないって話だ。もう俺を殺した犯人がどうかは後回し。その内なんとかなるさなんて軽い気持ちだったんだが、

……お前かよ。お前が犯人かよ。少し考えればすぐにわかることだった。なのになぜ俺は考えることを後回しにしてしまったんだ。

やれやれ、この性格のせいでとんだ災難だ。



Part 1

June Twenty-Sixth (Monday), 5AM. There was no variety show showing on the television this time, but rather a mail-order program hosted by Japanets Takahata⁶⁸ or something. Like always, Yuu was watching the program. Seeing that her hair seemed wet, I gathered that she had at some point taken a bath. Sera was also there, kneeling and staring fixedly at the same television program.

“Ayumu. I’ve been thinking about something quite a lot lately...”

As always, I was seized by those beautiful, frank jade-colored eyes. She looked at me without breaking her serious expression, and my nerves began to attack me.

“About what?”

“In the end, all things need names, right?”

“Eh? Well, it wouldn’t be good to not have a name, I guess.”

“So things really do need names, right? In truth, I thought of a new technique. I want to attach a name to the technique, but I can’t think of any words that end in ‘kaeshi’... won’t you help me think of some?”

What, it was just that? Now I really felt silly for having gotten nervous...

“Do you really have to attach ‘kaeshi’ to the name?”

“If at all possible. Because it’s a Hiken⁶⁹ technique.”

So, all the Hiken techniques had to be “something kaeshi”?

Ah, right. It’s probably just because she loves her Tsubame Gaeshi⁷¹. That’s probably the only reason.

“Hm, but I’ve never really seen what the technique looks like...”

“Well, first I glide down like this...”

She gestured with her hands in an attempt to show me, but I honestly had no idea. But I have to admit that she was pretty cute,

sitting there and thinking seriously like that.

“Hiken, Tsuru no Ongaeshi.⁷⁰ How about that?”

Wouldn't that be repaying someone through injury?⁷¹

“That's no good, I think.”

I smiled wryly and rejected her suggestion, upon which she gave me an “I see...” in a somewhat disappointed voice.

“Well, how about Ether Chabudaigaeshi?⁷³”

“Eh? There are names you can rip off and names you can't. That's one of the latter.”

“But, nobody would understand the reference, would they? Only people who know the reference would understand.”

“No, that's no good. Also, that's not a sword technique. It's a magic technique.”

I held my head and rejected her suggestion, upon which she gave me an “I see...” in a somewhat disappointed voice.

“Just show it to me next time. After I see what kind of technique it is, I'll think about it more.”

“I understand.”

Well now, shall I prepare to head off for school? If I don't go while the sun is down, I won't even be able to make it there.

When I stood up, Yuu looked up at me. She *tap tapped* her ballpoint pen on the table.

Stay here today. = “Oniichan! Please don't go!”

Her pretty eyes focused on me. Was something up? I asked, but she seemed resolved to stay silent.

But even if you tell me to stay here... if an enemy shows up, I'm sure Sera would be able to do something about it, right? I'm a

zombie, but I'm also a high school student. Unfortunately, I have a duty to go to school.

"I'll try to be back as soon as possible then."

Absorbing my words for a short moment, Yuu gave me a slight nod of consent.

I rapidly ascended the stairs and passed by Haruna. Today, she was wearing a no-sleeve polo shirt along with a pair of short pants with the pant legs folded up.⁷⁴ It definitely suited her.

"Ah, Haruna."

"Hm? What? Something wrong?"

Her big eyes blinked twice in surprise, and I told her everything I had talked about with Dai-sensei. I also told her about how her errand to find the artifact had been completed.

"You talked with Dai-sensei?! Dai-sensei is not someone you can just talk with so freely like that! She's amazing, you know! Dai-sensei is!"

For some reason, as she yelled at me, Haruna grabbed my arms, swept my legs from under me, and simultaneously backhand chopped me in the head, throwing me down repeatedly like that over and over. When I asked her how Dai-sensei was amazing...

"Dai-sensei is a hero, a martial arts expert, a warrior, a priest, a magician, a merchant, a thief, and what's more, a complete hedonist!⁷⁵"

Those last few were bad, weren't they? A merchant, a thief, a hedonist... what a crazy life that must be.

"Anyways, she said that you should focus on recovering your magic. You can't go back like you are now, right?"

"That's true, but... I guess I was thinking that things are fine the way they are... at any rate, I would have to come to this world to exterminate Megalo, and it's not like there's anybody waiting for

me back there...”

For just a moment, Haruna had on a sad expression that didn't fit her at all. I placed my hand on Haruna's head.

“If you stay here, you'll have to make lunch for me, you know?”

“Well, 's no helping that. Oh right! I made something incredible today! I'm sure it'll be great!”

She banged on her petite chest and showed me a smile. It was the same refreshing smile she showed at mealtimes.

As I watched Haruna bounce down the rest of the stairs, I returned to my room. I changed into my uniform and took up my backpack. There was nothing in it. All of my textbooks and notes had been left in my locker at school.

Oh right, there was PE class today. I need to pack my jersey. And then I need to get my lunch from Haruna.

I hope that today will be a boring, uneventful day.

Of all the zombies in the world, I was probably the only one who wished so much for peace.

Part 2

On Mondays, from first period I was subject to the torture that was PE. Why was it torture, you ask? Do you really think I can exercise under the blazing sun like that? Zombies couldn't do anything when it wasn't nighttime.

If we were exercising in the gym, I could show off my physical strength to my heart's content, but unfortunately we were playing volleyball today on the field. Set up volleyball in the gym, dammit.

As a result, I collapsed before the match had even begun, and was carried to the infirmary. And I lay there in bed until noon. It was a normal school day, without anything really worth mentioning.

Well, if there was one thing worth mentioning... it was lunch!

Alright, Haruna! Battle start!

I ripped the top off the box, and in it were... stewed bear claw, spiny lobster, what looked to be shark fin stew, what looked to be fried suckling pig, something that looked like scraps of abalone steak... a small feast fit for a Chinese emperor was crammed into that box. I see, this is what she meant by "I made something incredible today!" That was certainly true.

There must have been nearly a hundred and fifty things in this box. Each and every one of them were super tiny. What a jumbled up mess. But pretty amazing. Where the hell did she find all these ingredients?

"Wow... sort of disgusting... who made this? Sera-san?"

Orito stared at my food, dumbfounded. I mercilessly fended off his chopsticks as he reached for my food.

"It was Haruna. To tell you the truth, the ultimate fried egg I had last time was also made by her. I won't let Sera cook. As long as my

heart continues to beat, I will never let her cook.”

“Dammit, I’m so jealous!”

Orito even started attacking my face with his chopsticks. Hmph... as if I’d let you hit me!

As we crossed chopsticks with each other, Orito underhandedly grabbed the spiny lobster with his free hand. He knows I like lobster too...

“You know, you really have to share things as delicious as this with everyone.”

The corners of his mouth turned upwards into a smile. What a spiteful little four-eyes... how dare he take my lobster...

“Well, is it good?”

I asked him with tears pooling in my eyes, and he gave me a huge affirmative nod. Oh, is that so? The fried eggs were already shockingly delicious. With these types of ingredients, I’m sure the food was extravagantly tasty. Well, if I could be allowed to speak selfishly for a moment, it would have been nicer if I could have gotten this meal straight out of the oven though...

Part 3

“Yahoo~!”

It was Orito who said that, not me. We were in room 305. After school ended, I came to visit Kyouko-chan in the hospital together with Orito. Of course, it was in order to get the Kyoudoufu.

“I brought you a Masked Burger Set as a gift today. Kyouko, you haven’t eaten something like this in a while, right?”

Orito chuckled and passed over the plastic bag. With a somewhat troubled expression, Kyouko-chan received the bag from Orito.

Well, that’s no wonder. Is it seriously normal to give sick people fast food? Looking at the piles of cake boxes and fruit around Kyouko, it really seemed that everyone brought food as a visitation present, and that it would be utterly impossible to get through it all. Oh and by the way, I had brought a random romance novel for her to kill time with.

“Thank you very much.”

As if we were exchanging business cards, I gave her a bow and presented it to her with both hands, upon which she gave me a heavenly smile. Drawn in, I also ended up smiling in return. It was one of those smiles.

“Ah, Aikawa-san, this...”

She handed me a plastic bag, in which was none other than what I had come for. I’m seriously grateful she went through so much trouble.

“What’s that? Food?”

At Orito’s puzzled look, Kyouko-chan sent him a teasing grin. “It’s a secret.”

“Sorry about making you go through all the trouble.”

I took out the money to pay for the tofu from my wallet, but Kyouko-chan pushed back the money with her hands.

“Don’t worry about the money! I also got this too.”

She hugged the romantic novel to her chest and smiled. Soon, I ended up joining her, smiling as well.

“Thanks, I’ll take it then. There’s someone who would go through heaven and hell to eat it.”

“Ahh, so Aikawa-san isn’t the one who would be eating it?”

She pouted and looked downwards.

“Is Aikawa eating Kyouko?”

At Orito’s sexual harassment, Kyouko-chan became as red as an apple.

After that, we enjoyed some normal small talk for a while. I suddenly remembered that Yuu had told me to come back home quickly, and stood up with an “I think I should be going soon.”

“Ahh, then let me see you out.”

Kyouko-chan cheerfully came down from the bed.

Orito suddenly excused himself, saying he had to go to the bathroom. Ugh, do that after I leave, dammit. Together with the ceaselessly smiling Kyouko-chan, I went as far as the hospital entrance.

How exactly am I supposed to get this tofu to the person who asked for it? As I waved to Kyouko with a “Thanks. I’ll come again,” I took out my cell phone and called Dai-sensei.

Riiiiinnngggggg.... Riiiiinnngggggg...

“Hello~. This is the Matelis Magical Academy~.”

The gentle, laid-back voice put my heart at ease. I knew exactly who it was just from how she spoke.

“Ah, is this Dai-sensei? It’s me. Aikawa Ayumu.”

“Oh? You’re still calling me that~?”

Dai-sensei chuckled. I mean, Haruna had always called her that, so I ended up calling her that too.

“I got the thing you asked for, but what exactly should I do with it?”

“Oh? It was handed over to you already~?”

“Yes.”

“Then I’ll come to get it. Let’s see... I’ll be there when it’s nine in your world, alright~?”

“Nine? Wait, Dai-sensei is coming personally?”

“Yes. Haruna hasn’t been able to return to being a masou shoujo yet, right~?”

“Could you take her back to Virie with you when you return?”

“I really doubt Haruna would agree to that~. She might look like that, but she is a really proud person, you know~? She would definitely say ‘Shut up! Desu! Don’t worry about me! Desu!’ or something like that ~~.”

Even when she’s angry, she still managed to think as far as to add “desu” to the end of things to show respect, hm?

“So, let’s meet somewhere. Somewhere without too many people is probably the best~. I’ll definitely stand out~.”

I recalled the time I had met Haruna. She fell down from the sky like a meteorite, and it would definitely be a bother if Dai-sensei made a similar entrance.

“In that case, how about the graveyard where Haruna first dropped in?”

“Where... is that? Could you please give me the address~~?”

It seemed that she had no idea where Haruna had first dropped in on this world. Well, granted, she had assumed that Haruna had been in Kyoto until recently. I didn't know the address of the graveyard, but I did give her the addresses of a few places near the graveyard, to which she responded with an “I understand~~.”

I then ended the phone call, and when I looked over my shoulder, I saw that Kyouko-chan was still waving to me. Was she seriously planning on continuing to wave until she couldn't see me anymore?

As I thought, she was seriously, lovably cute.

Part 4

Well then, I had come home quickly just as Yuu had requested, but... was there something special about today?

Ah. It's been exactly a month! Exactly a month since I met Yuu... or rather, since I became a zombie.

Anything strange happen? = "Oniichan. Did something happen~?"

The minute I went into the house, I heard a tapping, and when I went into the living room I found those words waiting for me. She was glancing at me, so I shook my head to signal that nothing had happened. As if saying "Then that's fine," she silently returned her gaze to the television, and continued to sip her tea.

For the moment, I returned back to my room, and changed into my casual clothes. I went back downstairs carrying my uniform and my jersey, and tossed them into the wash hamper in the bathroom. Sera did the laundry, which was convenient. Sorry, but I don't think I should be washing Haruna and Yuu's undergarments...

I walked towards the kitchen with my bento box and the Kyoudoufu, when I saw Haruna in the living room.

"Ah, welcome back. I'm hungry."

"Can't you make anything other than bento lunches?"

"I don't want to make food for myself. Doesn't that feel pretty lonely?"

Haruna stared at the television, looking as if she was lost in thought. Now that I think about it, she was always alone in her own world, wasn't she?

Preparing meals for other people, and having meals prepared for

herself. Like that, she probably wouldn't feel as alone.

"Oh right... the bento was great. Thanks."

I gave her the brightest zombie smile I could muster, but Haruna didn't even face me, instead just muttering "No kidding." She wasn't facing me because she was blushing, right? Your ahoge is sure jumping around a lot. You're really happy about this, aren't you? To be thanked like that.

Grinning at Haruna's cute response, I entered the kitchen, and then I couldn't stop the corners of my lips from turning upwards into a smile.

There were an absurd number of ingredients scattered around the kitchen. The leftovers from the Chinese Emperor's banquet. Did she just leave them lying around like this through the day? This was something Sera should have at least tried to clean up, but...

When I opened the refrigerator, I saw that it was packed to the brim with seafood and other things that would spoil easily. Ah, so she did try to clean things up at least a bit. But as expected, you couldn't fit 150 things into a refrigerator... also, there was no place to put the tofu.

In other words, today we would just be having these leftovers. There were 150 things here, so it's not like I was going to get tired of eating these things.

It's just, it was still a huge amount of work.

"Haruna, after this I'm going to the graveyard to meet Dai-sensei..."

"Hmph. I'm... not going."

"I see."

The clock had passed nine, so I took out the tofu from the refrigerator and left the house. As I was walking, at some point Haruna appeared at my side. I didn't even bother asking her why she was there when she had said she wasn't coming. But even then...

“I-I’m just going to the convenience store.”

She came up with that excuse. We separated midway, but she would probably come later.

Part 5

As usual, the graveyard was quiet. The shiny polished gravestones almost seemed to suck the heat out of the summer air around them, and the tree branches elegantly waved in the gentle breeze.

Ahhh, this really was a place that could calm me down.

In the shadow of a wooden grave marker, I could see the form of a twin-tailed girl with chest-length hair, even though I couldn't see her face in the dim light. She looked around the age of a junior high school student? She was taller than Haruna. Crap. I'm really into twin-tails, you know.

Well, it's not like anybody other than a zombie or a masou shoujo would be here at the graveyard like this, so that was probably Dai-sensei herself, but I should probably check just to make sure.

"Dai-sensei?"

She chuckled with a hand on her mouth, and responded with a "Yes it iiis~~"... rather, that was what I expected to happen.

Instead, in place of a response, what the girl did instead was...

She ran me right through with a sword.

"Wh... Why...?"

I had no idea what she was talking about. Did I do something?

Crash. The Kyoudoufu in the plastic bag I was carrying dropped onto the floor.

"Good evening. Aikawa-san."

The grinning girl was not Dai-sensei.

How did I know that this wasn't Dai-sensei? Well, because this was

someone I knew... it was Kyouko-chan.

“... How many times do I have to kill you for you to die?”

Her eyes thinned. In contrast, my eyes opened wide.

It was you?!

It seriously was you?!

-

The one who killed me was you?!

-

“Nomobuyo, woshi, hashitawa, dokeda, gunmiicha, dei, ribura.”

Kyouko sent forth words that I recognized. Before my eyes, her clothes changed into what looked like a cosplay costume. The cast around her left hand also disappeared, and although she grasped a sword in her right hand, she had a wooden sword in her left. A training sword or something?

A masou shoujo. The serial murderer was not a vampire ninja or a Megalo, but rather a masou shoujo.

That's why nobody remembered what had happened. Everyone in the neighborhood had their memories manipulated, and the incident erased from their minds.

And the reason why I still remembered was probably this:

Even though I was in the memory manipulation range, there was one type of people who were immune from its effects. Those people were precisely the people who could perform the memory manipulation. Namely, masou shoujo.

In other words, memory manipulation wouldn't work on someone like me who had become a masou shoujo. Well, what about the time I was killed? To perform the memory manipulation, you needed to specify an area of effect. At that time, I was in this

graveyard. I was probably outside that area.

Haruna wasn't supposed to have come to Tokyo. In that case, who was the masou shoujo who was put in charge of Tokyo?

Both Haruna and Kyouko had the appearance of a junior high school student. Did all masou shoujo look like that?

"What's wrong? Your face is red... don't tell me you have a fever..."

Now that I think about it, Kyouko was acting pretty suspicious back then. She was probably trying to manipulate my memories by putting a hand to my forehead, right? Just like Haruna had done to Orito. However, because I was a masou shoujo, it had no effect.

In retrospect, her desire to meet me as soon as possible was pretty suspicious in the first place. Dammit, although I had said that I was looking for the criminal, I had completely let down my guard. This is what happened when you took it too easy, wasn't it? I'm such an unbelievable idiot.

I couldn't move my body.

Like that time... like the time I was with that dog. Like the time I was killed.

"Do you actually think you can fight with me with that small an amount of magical power? ... Laughable. Only one barrier and you can't move, can you?"

So, this was like that time with Shironaga, when Haruna tried to seal Shironaga's movements with a barrier...?

Kyouko still was showing me her well-mannered smile. And then...

"Ariel-sensei is not coming. I asked her to do something. Quite unfortunate, isn't it?"

Her round cat-like eyes thinned.

"... And once I take care of you, everything will be settled."

Before she could run a sword through my heart, I found myself on the receiving end of a rugby-like tackle. It sent my head spinning. The person clinging to my chest was none other than a frantic looking Haruna.

“Ayumu! Ayumu!”

Was she worried about my not being able to move? I would love to thank you, but I can’t move my tongue.

“Haruna... I see. This is why memory manipulation didn’t work on Aikawa-san.”

Haruna completely ignored Kyouko’s threatening words.

“A barrier, is it? ... Hyah.”

Haruna chopped me with her hand, and I could move again.

“Hm? Where did you learn how to dispel barriers? You can’t even keep up in school.”

“I understand the theory behind constructing barriers, so I can figure out the theory behind dispelling them. I’m a genius, after all.”

At those words, Kyouko’s expression stiffened a bit.

“You’re as obnoxious as ever...”

“Hey, Ayumu. Who’s this?”

You don’t know her? She knows your name though.

Kyouko seemed unconcerned, and approached us with her sword-carrying hand casually swaying side to side like a student would swing her bookbag side to side while leaving school.

“The masou shoujo who killed me.”

“Ayumu’s enemy, then? ... In that case, she’s my enemy as well, hmm...”

As I readied my fists, Haruna stood in between Kyouko and me. She opened her arms wide and glared at Kyouko.

“Heh, interesting. What happened to Mystletainn? Are you planning to fight unarmed?”

Her angelic smile had yet to change.

Krchh. Kyouko readied her sword.

“Don’t overdo it!”⁷⁶

Thump. I kicked off the gravel floor. Holding Haruna to me, I began to jump away from that place.

“I won’t let you run away.”

Her laid-back voice resounded next to me, and she sent the thin, long sword she carried in her right hand into my flank with amazing speed. The wounds on my body steadily increased. She sent the wooden sword gripped underhand in her left hand pummeling into me and pulverized my ribcage.

I knew how powerful a masou shoujo could be all too well. When it came to speed and power and everything, I wasn’t even nearly a match for them.

I remembered the dog’s words at that time. This was just a guess, but what he probably wanted to say was...

“Please hurry up and run away! With your level of magical energy, this is out of the question! This person...”

”... is not of this world.”⁷⁷

If that’s what he wanted to say, I could agree with him. I could also agree that this was out of the question.

“Please... just die already!”

She rushed me and plunged her sword right through my heart. Of course, before then, I had let go of Haruna.

This was my only chance. This one moment where my opponent thought she had won and let down her guard. I would drive a full-strength attack right into her.

The minute I tried to move my right hand, it was cut off.

What the hell was up with her impossible speed?!

She sent me flying with a kick, and I collided with a gravestone. Haruna ran towards me while calling my name.

“Oh, you can still move? Hmm... what exactly can I do that will kill you? ... What if I burned you to cinders?”

The end of the sword glowed red, and a fireball appeared. The fireball steadily grew in size. A fireball made of magical energy.

I heard the sound of an explosion, and the fireball was shot at me with incredible speed. Right in front of me, it seemed to have struck some kind of wall, and vanished, sending ripples along the wall. I recognized that wall. It was Haruna's barrier.

In order to collect my severed hand, I began to run, flying over the gravestones. Kyouko immediately gave chase. Her two cutely waving pigtailed gradually closed in on me.

Having no other choice, I shifted into attack mode.

“346!”

She dodged my roundhouse kick with a crouch. I firmly grabbed the sword that came up at me, and blood dripped down from the palm of my hand. At that moment, Kyouko stopped moving for just a second. If I still had my right hand right now, I would be able to send a full-powered attack her way. Dammit.

I tried to send a strong kick into her flank, but she guarded against it with her other sword.

But, this can work. With this flow of battle, I think I can get in one satisfactory attack... but it was hopeless. A ball of flame slammed into me, and sent me tumbling right into another gravestone.

“Ayumu!”

Haruna ran over. Kyouko began to give chase, but a ruby light emitted from both Haruna’s hands and Kyouko stopped in her tracks... it looked like another barrier.

“Listen, Ayumu. With how I am now, I can only set up one more barrier, so plan accordingly.”

Only one more barrier. That’s not good. I’m a zombie, so I heal especially slowly when it comes to fire attacks. So I had to rely on Haruna to protect me from the magical attacks.

“Haruna, why are you fighting with me? Aren’t you on her side?”

“P-Pretty much...”

For some reason, Haruna blushed. It was exceedingly cute, and my jaws slackened in response.

“Pretty much? Aren’t you pushing yourself a bit hard here?”

“Shut up! Look, if you have time to talk to me then go get your arm instead! I’m... definitely not going to touch something as gross as that!”

That’s true. She probably wouldn’t want to touch something like a severed arm. Not just because she’s a girl... anybody would think the same.

While Kyouko was held at a distance, I ran to collect my arm. It seemed I was going to make it in time.

Haruna had her hands thrust out in front of her, readying herself to be able to erect a barrier at any time. I also began to gather my strength, prepared to bet everything on my next attack.

In a moment... and I seriously mean in an instant... Kyouko closed the distance between us.

Her sword danced. I immediately flew backwards, but I was firmly sliced diagonally from my chest to my flank.

The attacks continued. I desperately tried to avoid them while counterattacking. Her movement speed was very fast. But on countless occasions, I had fought with opponents that were fast like this. She was just a bit faster than they were. Once I got used to it, it wasn't impossible to dodge her attacks.

That's what I thought, but it was hopeless. The lower half of my body was cut through and fell off.

And then, Kyouko aimed for my neck as my head fell to the ground, and brought her sword down.

This was bad. Very bad. Don't chop my head off. I won't be able to do anything anymore.

Clang! The sword didn't cut through me, but instead I heard the sound of clashing metal.

Finding herself attacked by green swords, Kyouko ran from that place.

Nice timing. I felt like I've said the same thing before... but in any case, I gave out a sigh of relief.

Right in front of me stood a crimson-eyed Sera. She was carrying both a sword made of leaves and a chainsaw.

"Hmm... I was told by Hellsythe-dono to come and assist... but the enemy is... a human?"

Sera watched Kyouko with a somewhat uncomfortable expression. Oh right, vampire ninjas couldn't kill humans.

"Don't worry. That's a monster who's just put on a human disguise."

"Is that so... things are pretty hard on you, aren't they? There are more fights to the death in this city than even the village I lived in."

I reattached my body, and took the chainsaw from Sera. For some reason, I could see a hint of happiness on Sera's usually stern face.

"Hm? Those eyes..." Kyouko pointed at Sera with her sword. Did

she know about vampire ninjas?

“You’re the same as me, aren’t you?”

Along with those words, Kyouko’s child-like large eyes bled crimson. As she turned to one side, I could see a black cloak behind her.

“Sera...”

“I don’t know her. I can feel another, different power in her.”

I had asked Sera because I thought she might know this person if she was also a vampire ninja, but Sera immediately responded in the negative.

And then, I saw this “different power” with my own eyes.

Right where Kyouko was standing blew gusts of wind. Yes, it was the same unpleasant, purple wind that signaled a Megalo was preparing to fight.

When I glanced at Haruna, I saw that she had shut her eyes tight, and was shaking in the shadow of a gravestone.

She was a vampire ninja, a masou shoujo, and also a Megalo? What the hell.

“Why... why does she have the same magical power as a Megalo...?”

Haruna mumbled as if possessed by something. It seemed that Haruna had already withdrawn from the battle.

“Here I go.”

Sera brandished her black cloak, and gripped her sword made of leaves. She attacked directly from the front, sending forth what almost looked like a shoulder tackle, and sent up a whirlwind of purple wind.

The two crimson-eyed girls clashed swords. Sera, who was firmly

gritting her teeth, and Kyouko, who had a light smile on her face. As the sound of weapons clashing rang through the air, the purple wind whirling behind Sera began to take the form of a long, thin tornado.

Kyouko tried sink the wooden sword she was gripping underhand into Sera's flank, but Sera jumped backwards. Right then, she was swallowed up by the tornado and sent flying out. I dropped the chainsaw, running to catch Sera.

"Sera! Are you alright?!"

She came flying into my chest, sending me on my back and sliding along the gravel with incredible force. The impact had enough force to almost make me faint. Sera's hair had been dirtied by sand and pebbles, but the determination had not faded from her eyes. Thankfully, she seemed to be alright.

I supported Sera by the shoulder while glaring at Kyouko.

"Hey, this is something I really wanted to ask, but why are you killing people?"

"Aikawa-san, if you knew you could live forever if you killed people... you surely would do it too, no?"

"Don't screw with me... I don't want anything like that."

"That's a lie. After all, Aikawa-san has an immortal body, doesn't he?"

She made another tornado. The tornados flattened out like an empty can being crushed, and then expanded until they looked like volleyball sized spinning tops.

As they revolved at high speeds, the tornadoes orbited Kyouko like a satellite.

"What the hell is that...? I've... never seen that before."

Haruna's eyes had widened. It seemed that this wasn't a type of magic... it was probably one of Kyouko's abilities as a vampire

ninja. Just like Sera could summon tree leaves and manipulate them, she seemed to be able to summon tornadoes.

“Now then, I’m going to start being serious, alright?”

Accompanied by the two tornadoes, Kyouko rushed forward and attacked me directly from the front.

Kyouko swung her sword downwards, and I took her attack without dodging. The tornadoes were being a hindrance, so I couldn’t dodge. A spray of blood painted the air red.

As if I was in a carwash, the two tornadoes closed in on me from left and right. The spinning top tornadoes stretched out like a pair of loose socks. If they sandwiched me between them, what would I do? As I thought about the situation, I was hit by something from behind. I pitched forward, headed right for Kyouko, but she suddenly fell back, so I crashed right into the ground. I heard the grinding of the two tornadoes right behind me.

“Sera, what the hell are you doing?!”

“Those tornadoes are dangerous. You were just about to be pulverized by them.”

Even so, you didn’t have to kick me... Sera and I stood side by side, and simultaneously launched our attacks.

I attacked from the front, and Sera the side. The tornadoes weren’t particularly fast, so while dodging them I raised my fist high above my head and brought it down. I was making such an exaggerated motion on purpose, to draw an attack. If you showed such a huge gap in your defense to a fighter, they wouldn’t be able to help wanting to counterattack, right?

As expected, Kyouko launched her wooden sword up at me.

“Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi!”

Sera’s blow connected. I was certain that the fight was over, but she managed to avoid Sera’s follow-up slice just barely. Scraps of her black cloak and fresh blood danced in the air. Kyouko next went

after Sera, brandishing her sword.

Clicking her tongue after seeing that her attack hadn't connected, Sera now had to deal with the new attack. Kyouko's sword attack, like the time Sera had killed the anteater, was so fast that I couldn't even see the flash of the sword.

Once again, blood was sent into the air. This time, it was Sera's leg that had been cut.

She had probably quickly pulled her leg back to dodge. Her leg hadn't been sliced off, but a gaping wound had opened up.

This was the timing I was looking for. I brought my heel down on the top of her head.

From midair, like an axe splitting firewood, my kick came flying down. This attack was my strongest attack, filled with the 600% power I had stored up. It would be ridiculous if she didn't die from this.

My timing was right on the mark. It would definitely hit... I thought, but while Kyouko attacked Sera with her sword, she threw her body to the side.

Yes, she was expecting my attack. Dammit, I probably had jumped too high. My full-powered heel drop managed just to graze one of her pigtails, and otherwise ended in failure. What's more, after Kyouko fell to the floor, she sent a counterattack my way.

Normally, when you fall onto the ground, you put your hands on the ground, right? Don't push yourself too hard from that position, dammit!

Her wooden sword slammed into my leg, and I heard the sound of breaking bone.

I took a step back to put some distance between us. I had completely forgotten that the tornadoes were still there.

I felt a sensation, as if my back was being polished by a giant nail file. What the hell, were the tornadoes made of swords or

something?

Kyouko came chasing after me, so for now I tried to get away from her... no, here, I should...

As my back continued to be shaved by the tornadoes, I found myself on the receiving end of Kyouko's attack.

Her sharp, thin sword thrust deep within me. The heavenly smile that she was showing me was actually the smile of a demon.

"I'll grind your body to pieces like this."

"That would certainly be a bother."

I firmly grabbed onto Kyouko's body. I didn't try to run, and I didn't try to struggle. Instead, all I did was take her into a deep lover's embrace.

To stop her from moving.

Sera thrust a sword right through Kyouko, and straight through me as well. Kyouko opened her mouth wide, letting out a small shriek.

When Sera withdrew her sword, the tornadoes stopped turning, and Kyouko's body collapsed onto the ground.

I let out a sigh, and stroked my chest in relief.

Was it over?

... She was damn strong. I couldn't think of any other way we could have won.

"It seems like it's over."

Sera offered me a hand, so I took it and stood up. And then, Sera flew into my chest.

"Hey hey, what..."

I felt my face heating up in embarrassment for a moment, but my carefree attitude was soon knocked out of me.

A sword had pierced through Sera's back.

A twin-tailed girl was gripping the sword. It was the girl we had just killed.

"I seem to have died once... but, too bad."

"What's the meaning of this?!"

"I still have around ten lives left in me."

Huh? What the hell? That's completely below the belt!

I was rooted to the spot, dumbfounded, but I soon tried to distance myself from her with Sera in my arms, and ran to where Haruna was.

Haruna had the chainsaw, so I had to retrieve it.

Perhaps because of that one attack, Sera was limp and motionless. The leaves that had once filled the air around us were also gone. She didn't seem to have died... dammit, was it just from how much blood she had lost?

"Haruna, you learned about the Gem of Life, haven't you? Please go ahead and tell Ayumu-san about it."

Slowly walking towards us, Kyouko chuckled. Just like how she looked when I first met her, her face was cute. Could it be that it was time for things to be explained?

"Explain yourself."

"The Gem of Life is an artifact that can revive the dead. If you use it on the living, you can render death ineffective just once."

Sounded like something that I would often see in RPGs, but you could seriously make things like that?

"But, to make one of those, you need an incredible amount of magical energy, so a normal masou shoujo shouldn't be able to possess ten."

“I see, so that’s where the sacrifices come in.”

Kyouko seemed shocked at my words.

“Sacrifices?”

Haruna’s ahoge waved from side to side, and she asked me with a voice filled with bewilderment.

“In short, if she has a large amount of magical energy, she can make one right? So if she kills humans from this world, and changes them into magical energy, she can make these Gems of Life or whatever. Right?”

At my question, Kyouko grinned.

“Correct.”

“But, the humans in this world shouldn’t have that much magical energy!”

Haruna’s ahoge jumped from side to side and she shouted.

“Impossible!” her ahoge seemed to be saying.

“But what if you sacrificed them? Then they would become large amounts of magical energy.”

This was something the dog had told me. I didn’t really remember too many of the specifics, though.

“Aikawa-san is surprisingly well-informed, isn’t he? I never thought you would also know about *that person*.”

That person, huh? He was probably the one who had given Kyouko the power of a vampire ninja and the magical energy of a Megalo. What a bother.

Kschh. Kyouko’s body blurred for a moment, and she was standing right in front of me.

I stepped back in an attempt to dodge, but the point of her sword stopped right in front of my face, and a huge fireball formed.

I kicked the sword up. However, the fireball did not disappear, and fired at me. There wasn't even a smidgen of time for me to dodge. But, almost as if mocking my worry, the fireball suddenly disappeared.

“Aha, so you've finally come. I was waiting for you.”

Kyouko fell back half a step, and once again readied her sword.

I saw a familiar set of plate armor and pair of gauntlets in front of me. Long, straight silver hair that swayed in the wind. She stood there without an expression, staring blankly out into space.

She had never come to watch my battles before. Did she realize that I was in a pinch?

In any case, Yuu was standing right there.

This was a reinforcement I wasn't expecting. Yuu had the power to turn me into a zombie. If she fought on my side, we should easily be able to beat Kyouko.

Flames arced in a semicircle and attacked Yuu, but she dismissed the flames with just a wave of her hand.

Yeah. As I thought, Yuu was really strong.

At that point, with my confidence in Yuu, I pretty much decided to leave the rest of the fight to her.

Kyouko continued to chuckle, and suicide rushed Yuu while creating more tornadoes. Yuu stood stock still, and just like before, waved her hands.

As Yuu's silver hair was violently tossed around by the winds, Kyouko brought her sword down on Yuu. Alright, it was a huge attack this time. An ideal opening for a counterattack.

However, Yuu blocked the attack with her gauntlets. Not being able to withstand the force of the attack, her knees gave way.

“Hm?”

A puzzled expression came up on Kyouko's face, and she cocked her head to the side. She kicked Yuu's plate armor when she stood up, and Yuu wobbled backwards while clutching the place she was kicked.

Hey hey, those were both attacks you could have easily avoided, you know. I mean, Kyouko had probably planned for you to evade them, but you don't have to deliberately take them straight on.

"... I see. Those gauntlets hold the power to negate magical energy. What an amazing piece of armor. However, the one using them is too weak... how unfortunate. What a waste of such a huge amount of magical energy."

Kyouko sighed, shaking her head slightly from side to side.

Could it be that Yuu couldn't fight very well? Could it be that her leaving the fighting to me was not because she didn't see the need to interfere, but rather that she knew that she was weak?

Yuu snatched the chainsaw away from Haruna, and muttered something.

-

There's no way she couldn't be transforming into a masou shoujo, right?

-

Completely contrary to my words, Yuu's clothes changed from the cosplay outfit I was familiar with to a different familiar cosplay outfit. However, her gauntlets and armor remained a constant.

When Haruna wore that outfit it was cute, when I wore that outfit it was disgusting, but when you put a suit of armor over it I admit it looked pretty cool.

At that moment, a number of memories began flowing out into my head.

"... Well, that's alright, I'm picking up quite a few signals in this area."

I'll go look somewhere else."

The crayfish had said that he could feel the energy of a masou shoujo somewhere else.

"Who are you? It's rare to see a male masou shoujo. And also, your magical power is so weak. You, are you really a masou shoujo?"

"Please hurry up and run away! With your level of magical energy, this is out of the question! This person, this world..."

"Do you actually think you can fight with me with that small an amount of magical power? ... Laughable. Only one barrier and you can't move, can you?"

Zarii. The dog. Kyouko. Every single person I've met who could sense magical energy had said that my level of magical energy was tiny.

But...

"Who exactly are you? Dai-sensei told me that you'd have to have an impossible amount of magical power to be able to steal the magical power from me, the genius bishoujo demon baroness Haruna-chan!"

That's what Haruna had said when I was made into a masou shoujo. I had thought beyond a doubt that I was the one who had stolen Haruna's magical energy. Haruna also thought so. But, that was not true.

-

The one who had stolen Haruna's magical energy was Eucliwood Hellscythe.

-

Yuu was probably also the reason I could become a masou shoujo.

I heard the *cling* and *clang* of weapon on weapon, and Yuu was blown in my direction.

“You’re still that weak even after becoming a masou shoujo?”

Kyouko sighed and shook her head, seeming disappointed... as I had suspected, Yuu’s battle ability was low. Even so, there was no questioning that her firepower had increased with the transformation. Should I join the battle here?

“Alright, Yuu. Together-“

Yuu briskly pointed at the floor. Now that I looked at it, there were words carved into the gravel.

Run away. You’re a hindrance.

Her cobalt-blue eyes that almost seemed to suck me in were focused right at me. Just like they were when we had first met.

I can’t run away here. I have to beat her, no matter what.

If we work together... and mix in Sera and Haruna as well, we can win this.

At least, don’t move. Definitely don’t move.

“You have to kill her ten times, you know? Let me join in.”

Yuu slapped me. What the hell. “Look again at what I wrote,” she seemed to be telling me.

Faced with those gleaming, gem-like eyes, I nodded once.

Faced with an almost Sera-like, coolly determined look like that, I found myself at a loss for words.

Part 6

I didn't know what to do.

Crossing swords with each other, Yuu and Kyouko had moved their battle in the direction of the big tree. I couldn't forget the look Yuu had given me with those blue eyes. In the darkness, I was at a loss as to whether I should wait here or go over to where the battle was taking place.

"Ayumu..."

Sera seemed to have regained consciousness, but her face was ghastly pale.

This was probably similar to what had happened before. She needed more blood.

"Haruna, give Sera some blood."

"Fine... just this one time, alright?"

After seeing Sera lock lips with Haruna, I stood up. In the end, I really couldn't just let Yuu fight alone. I didn't know what her chances of victory were, but seeing how the battle had unfolded up to now, I couldn't help but be worried.

The minute I stepped firmly onto the gravel, Sera caught me by my clothes.

"Wait." With a grim expression, she wiped her mouth with her hands.

"Wait for what?!"

I shook off Sera's hand and took a step forward. This time, Sera grabbed me by the shoulder.

"You would only become a hindrance. Hellscythe-dono's words

carry incredibly strong power in them.”

“I’ve heard about that ability.”

People who heard her words would become as just as she said. She carried that kind of frightening power, and when she used it her head would ache.

Hm?

“People who hear her words... so, she can’t choose the target herself?”

“Precisely. Just watch.”

Sera said that to me, and I glanced in the direction of the large tree, where I saw Kyouko crumbling to the ground from her knees. She soon stood back up, but once again crumbled down. In response to that, Yuu dropped the chainsaw from her hands, and held her head in her gauntleted hands.

“Right now, Hellscythe-dono is saying the following.”

-

“Die.”

-

With just that one word, people would die?!

If I had gone to help her, and then had heard those words, what would become of me? I was being kept alive by Yuu’s power. If she then tried to kill me with the same power, I wonder which would take precedence...

That was why Yuu had not allowed me to fight with her.

If the people around her heard her say “Die,” they would all end up dying.

Her words were heavier than I had imagined...

“What are you laughing about? Gross... die! Idiot!”

Don't use those words lightly. = *“Geez! Don't say bad things about oniichan!”*

“Yuu, while I appreciate the sentiment, it's not like Haruna was saying that seriously either.”

“No, seriously die. Die with that gloomy necromancer over there!”

Death is painful.

Her tears that time... her words that time... were filled with many emotions.

A strong light sparked for a moment in the graveyard. It was so bright that I had to close my eyes, and I felt the power drain from my body. As expected from a body that's weak against light.

Something fell from the sky. It was a girl wearing a tattered-looking pair of gauntlets and a set of plate armor. Her beautiful, silver hair spread out in all directions, and she fell down to where I was.

I caught her, and saw that she had her eyes closed, as if she was sleeping. Her body was limp, and her head hung gently down. Her clothes dissolved into a faint light. The only things left were her plate armor and gauntlets.

“Are you alright?! Yuu! Hey! Yuu!”

Although I was bewildered at the sight of her exposed, almost transparently white skin, I continued to call out to her.

“I haven't died yet... in order to obtain that person's magical energy, I've been fighting in this form on purpose to lure her out...”

A certain twin-tailed girl with blood flowing from her ears readied her wooden sword and walked in our direction. Her eyes were filled with madness.

Could she seriously have poked out both her ears to get away from Yuu's power? That's going way too far!

Kyouko impaled herself with a sword. She probably wanted to heal her body that had been wounded during her fight with Yuu.

The blood streaming from her ears disappeared as if having been acted on by a rubber eraser, and her footsteps lightened.

“Well then, let’s continue this party.”

I lay Yuu’s body on top of the gravel, and tightened my fists as they shivered in fury.

Pooling all my hatred into my eyes, I glared at that bitch.

Her light smile pissed me off a lot. Suddenly, something else flew into my line of vision.

Haruna had appeared, holding a green sword.

“Haruna?”

Hearing my call, she turned her cute face in my direction. The ahoge coming out of the top of her head jumped from side to side.

“Hey, Ayumu. What’s this I’m feeling? It’s the first time I’ve felt this way. Even though I don’t care about the people in this world, seeing that gloomy necromancer²⁵ being done in like that... it’s enough to make my chest burn... I really want to punch that girl’s face in!”

“It’s probably because you actually do care a bit about Yuu.”

“... That... might be true. We never really talked that much though...”

“Otherwise, you want to do your best for my sake.”

At that suggestion, Haruna flushed apple red, and denied my statement vehemently. “I-It’s not like I’m doing this for you!” she spat out desperately.

“Ayumu, to be honest, the wound in my leg hasn’t healed yet. But, I thought of a new technique.”

Sera was standing by my side. Her composed, elegant face pointed straight forwards. She glanced for a moment in my direction,

“When we get home, won’t you help me think of a name for it?”

She gave me a small smile.

What is it with my life? Lately, the number of things I don’t want to lose just keeps increasing.

“Let’s go.”

Laughing once out of my nose, I kicked off the floor. In the same way, the two next to me kicked off the floor, and we all simultaneously aimed for the masou shoujo in front of us.

First was a shuriken made of tree leaves. Kyouko took that straight on, and thinned her eyes, concentrating on our movements.

“Kyaaaah!!”

Kyouko crouched and avoided Haruna’s diagonal sword swipe. Sera, not being able to use one leg, kicked off a wall made from leaves with her usable leg, changed direction in midair, and headed straight for Kyouko. Kyouko put an end to that attack with a single swipe from her sword.

While she made a big swing with her sword, I went in for a punch and tried to catch her right in the face. But, she barely managed to dodge me, and I was blown away by a kick.

“Not bad.”

With incredible speed, Kyouko almost seemed to vanish and closed in on Sera. A *clang!* sound reverberated through the air several times, after which Sera had been cut from her chest to her stomach, and fresh blood flew from her wounds. She almost looked like a poor butterfly.

In the space of that attack, Haruna tried to impale Kyouko with her green sword, but she was thrown back by a tornado.

This wasn't working. Like the dog had said, this was almost out of the question... she was just way too strong.

Leaves continued to fly around us. It seemed that Sera was still conscious. Haruna also seemed to have taken some serious damage, but she was scowling at me... pretty strong, these two were.

"Haruna, Sera, one more time!"

"OK!" "Here I go."

This time as well, Sera took the lead and attacked. A poorly-planned, reckless attack.

Kyouko swiped her sword from low to high in a crescent arc, and cut Sera's body into two... or so it seemed.

A body switching technique. Sera's specialty ninjutsu, in which she replaced her body with a fake. I was astonished at her skillful deceit. Sera was really good at creating openings.

However, Kyouko had realized what was going on. There was no way Sera would just attack her straight on like that. She was just opening herself up and luring us in. Luring me in.

From a blind spot, I came throttling out with the intent to bring a kick down on her head. There was no other time which I wished as strongly as I did this moment that I had tried a punch instead. Because, if I attacked with my legs, I couldn't dodge.

Kyouko went so far as to smile and cock her head to the side before deeply impaling me through. I had come out from a perfect blind spot. In situations like this where the difference in strength was so apparent, it was natural that we had no choice but to resort to those strategies. Of course, that's precisely what we were doing. There was no other way. And Kyouko understood that too well.

In other words... Kyouko could anticipate from where and when we would try to attack her.

My legs were swept from under me, and my body was thrown into the air for a moment. The next moment, I was blown away by the

tornado. Sera stood in the direction I was flying, looking like she was preparing to attack with a Tsubame Gaeshi. She couldn't respond fast enough to my sudden appearance. I was impaled by Sera's sword.

"A.... Ayumu..."

"Don't worry about it. It doesn't hurt at all."

We couldn't attack her straight on. And when you took into account the fact that she could read almost all of our surprise attacks, we really were in a hopeless situation.

What should we do?

... This was hopeless.

We couldn't do anything but give up.

Yes. We had to give up.

Just one more time. That's right, yeah. If we're completely blown away and left on the ground looking up at the sky just one more time, let's give up.

... And because of that, I wouldn't be satisfied unless we put our absolute all into this attack.

I gave a backwards glance to Sera and Haruna, seeing them rush once more at Kyouko just to be swept away. Dragging my immobile leg along the ground and pounding my tightly closed fist on the ground, I slowly dragged myself forwards. In front of me was the chainsaw. I picked that up and began to chant.

"Nomobuyo, woshi, hashitawa, dokeda, gunmiicha, dei, ribura."

The clothes I usually desperately tried to avoid wearing coordinated around me. The chainsaw emitted a ruby-colored light, as well as a shrill shriek. I unsteadily rose up, and stepped down hard on the gravel.

"Ah right, I forgot, but Aikawa-san is also a masou shoujo, isn't

he?”

Pulling out the sword with which she had just impaled Sera and kicking Haruna away, Kyouko faced this way.

I was suddenly slashed diagonally. But in return, I cut her down with the chainsaw.

“Eh?” Kyouko’s eyes opened wide. She probably wasn’t expecting me to be able to counterattack.

Kyouko’s wound closed right away. She had probably died once and then was revived.

“You monster!!”

Here it comes. A magic attack. Feeling as if I had been shot by a cannon, I shook violently and began to collapse.

No... not yet. I won’t collapse just from this.

I took a step back, and somehow managed to hold my ground. Ah, but it seemed she had broken my arm... well, whatever. If I still had my right hand, I could still punch her face in.

The sound of chaffed gravel filled the air, and I slowly advanced on sliding feet.

No matter what kind of attack she sent at me, no matter how many times she attacked me, I would slowly shuffle forwards.

Kyouko vehemently shook her head, and those large eyes shook in fear. It was almost as if she had seen a zombie and feared for her life.

“Stop! Die!”

No, I can’t stop. And no, I can’t die.

-

I still haven’t punched your face in.

-

Those annoying tornadoes came around again and tried to break my body into tiny pieces. Ah, if I get wedged between these two things, then it's all over. I guess it really is hopeless.

That's what I thought, but Haruna's final barrier immobilized one of the tornadoes. However, the other tornado carved into me. If I just let things be, I would be ground into minced meat.

But, you know, that wasn't enough.

Just because I was slowly being ground into minced beef was not a reason to give up.

"Fall! Kneel! Disappear!"

Kyouko gripped her wooden sword tight, and sent forth an attack with all her might.

"You... were strong. The strongest I've ever encountered. Freakishly strong."

I grabbed her wooden sword with my hand, and crushed it in my grip.

"That's...!! Breaking my masou renki... with your bare hands..."

"Sorry. Truth is, I'm also freakishly strong."

"A human... by a mere human..."

"Haven't I said it before? I might look like this, but I'm no human. I'm a zombie, and what's more, a masou shoujo... well then, how many more times do I have to kill you? Although, I wouldn't mind killing you ten times more."

The masou shoujo costume under her black cloak vanished.

"A... Ahh... Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!!"

She shook her head from side to side, and the tears stored up in the

corners of her eyes flowed out towards her cheeks.

Ahh, right. There was something I had wanted to tell the person who had killed me.

“They say that idiocy can only be cured by death. I was an idiot. Boredom might be a luxury, but it’s no fun. Loneliness might be peace, but then you cannot share your joy with others... thank you. My life changed because you killed me.”

My words probably took her completely by surprise. Kyouko even stopped shrieking.

I dropped the chainsaw on the ground, cleared the broken shards of her masou renki from my hands, crouched down, took a few deep breaths, and gathered my power. And then, I continued my words in a low voice.

“So, let me change your life this time.”

I took one step into my attack, forcing up all the power I had stored in my entire body, rolling that power up through my body’s rotation and sending it to my right arm. My fist tightened, my teeth clenched, and I concentrated that power into one spot. Trying to push all this power into a single attack, my fist drove full strength into that lovely face filled with so much hate.⁷⁸

Taking dirt and various things with her, Kyouko was completely blown away.

And then, at last, Kyouko stopped moving. She lay there, looking, as Haruna did, like a gentle young girl.

“It’s finally over...”

Sera dragged her leg, and spoke while holding her chest dyed in red.

“You’re full of holes.”

I gave her a quick laugh, and she returned with a laugh as well.

“You’re disgusting. Seriously, if you were that strong, you should have fought in that form from the beginning. Even though it’s disgusting.”

Sarcasm filled her every word. There was no ill will in her words at all.

“Haruna, are you alive?”

“O-Of course... who the hell do you think I am?”

She didn’t seem to be able to move her legs, but Haruna was as cheeky as ever.

I gave both Haruna and Sera one of my shoulders, and with these two maidens on both sides of me, I walked towards Yuu.

“Yuu.”

“Hellscythe-dono.”

“Hey, gloomy necromancer!”

At our calls, the silver-haired bishoujo hazily opened her eyes.

“Oh what, so you were alive?”

Haruna’s words almost seemed disappointed.

But, her ahoge seemed very happy as it jumped from side to side.

Yuu pressed on her head with one of her gauntleted hands, and sat up. She carved words in the gravel.

Is it over?

Sera answered Yuu’s question.

“Yes, Ayumu did it.”

Hearing those words, even though she was expressionless, Yuu seemed fully satisfied to me.

After seeing Sera pass Yuu her black cloak, I looked down on Kyouko's naked body laying there. Her eyes were still lit scarlet. It seemed that she still hadn't given up...

I tugged her up by her cloak, and raised my fist overhead.

"I have to make sure she's dead."

I began to send out another full-powered attack, but my right hand was firmly grasped. Even though I had become a masou shoujo and was using my full strength, my hand had been so firmly grasped that I couldn't move.

"Hey, don't stop me. There's no way we can let this person li--"

When I turned around, a bishoujo I had never seen before was there. Her waist-length hair was tied into twin tails, and she was wearing a loose white lab coat. I could also see a blouse, a pleated skirt, and a necktie.

"You're Ayumu-san, aren't you~? What are you doing to one of my students?"

The girl gave me a smile. However, the hand that was grasping my right hand increased its strength.

"Dai-sensei! Um, you're making a mistake! Ayumu might be an idiot, but you're making a mistake!"

Haruna was more shaken than I had ever seen her before. Ahh, this was Dai-sensei.

"Ariel-sensei... help me..."

Kyouko shamelessly let out a feeble cry. Her eye color had also returned to normal.

"Dai-sensei, this person did something in this world that you can't do. Let me go."

"That's a lie! I wouldn't do something like that..."

Kyouko took advantage of the situation and huge tears fell from her eyes, making me want to punch her face in all the more.

“What are you trying-“

“I tried reasoning with them so many times... but they ganged up on me... Haruna too.”

She sobbed, speaking intermittently through her cries. What a brilliant actor she is.

“Dai-sensei, please believe us.”

“Even if you say that, this girl is a good girl, so above all... at the very least, what you were trying to do now was something you can’t do, wasn’t it~?”

While she said that, Dai-sensei flung me away. My skirt flapped in the wind, and I rolled heavily on the gravel. Dai-sensei helped Kyouko up, and put her hands in the pockets of her long white coat.

“Dai-sensei! Why won’t you believe Ayumu?! Ayumu... these people... they’re super good people!”

Dai-sensei did not lend an ear to Haruna’s desperate words.

“Hmm, there just aren’t enough ingredients for me to believe them~.”

When she took her hands out of her pockets, she was grasping onto what looked awfully like Japanese katanas.

Talking this over was hopeless. If that’s the case, the only choice we had was to settle this with our fists.

I was hesitant to fight with Dai-sensei. Was it really alright to fight just because my words weren’t getting through? Well, but... I would definitely not forgive Kyouko, so if she wanted to fight, I should fight her... before she transforms.



“Haruna, Sera, Yuu. Fall back.”

“Huh? You want to fight with Dai-sensei? You’re an idiot!”

Haruna expectedly objected to my idea, but Yuu tossed me the chainsaw, and Sera stood next to me, not heeding my words.

“Haruna, has she transformed yet?”

“Isn’t that obvious just from looking?! She hasn’t transformed yet. Could it be... you’re actually trying to win?”

That would be correct. I showed Haruna my determination, and her Ahoge waved around, almost as if calling me an idiot.

“That black-cloaked girl over there, you’re very strong, aren’t you~? Won’t you fight with me?”

I was surprised at her sudden proposal. What the hell was she saying all of a sudden...?

Clang. I had never heard such a strong sound of metal on metal before. Sera was gone from my side.

“Meet words you like with drinks, and words you don’t with swords... that is who we are, the vampire ninjas.”

More sounds rang out. Dai-sensei continued to guard against the dancing sword strikes.

“How wonderful~. To think that there would be people like this in this world.”

Sounding delighted, Dai-sensei waved her sword. Rather than say she guarded against the attack, Sera managed to dislodge the sword from its current course and dodged it.

I need to get into this fight too. I readied my chainsaw and crouched.

Right then, Sera was knocked away in my direction. I suddenly took my hands off the chainsaw and caught Sera. The considerable force she hurtled into me with also knocked me back. The chainsaw flew somewhere off from the impact.

“Are you alright?”

“... This is frustrating.”

Her red eyes stared straight forwards. She clenched her teeth.

“I wanted to beat her with speed... but she’s faster than I am.”

What’s more, she doesn’t seem to be fighting with her full strength either.

I wanted to say that, but I had no time. Because Dai-sensei came in with a slash. Sera and I flew off in different directions. Dai-sensei came attacking in my direction. I kicked off a gravestone, and sent out my fist.

My attack was dodged, and my arm was cut. Blood sprayed out and dyed the air red.

After that, the sky was covered in green.

“The secret of my blade lay not in the blade that is hidden. Blades that fly as leaves on a tree, that is... Flying Sword, Hyakkizensatsu!”

Large numbers of blades covered the air like grass, and all fell towards Dai-sensei. But somehow, she managed to hit them all down.

You’ve got to be kidding. I was dumbfounded. I’ve never seen a person who could avoid every bit of rain in a downpour.

“Here I go.”

“Not good enough!”

Sera rushed at Dai-sensei but was kicked away, and my leg was chopped off. She hadn’t even transformed, but she was this fast? She was a complete monster. A twin-tailed monster.

Falling onto the ground, I reached out for my leg nearby to reattach it, and slid towards it.

Krchh. The sound of chaffed gravel rose up, and a sword pushed its way through my hand. Before I could grab my leg, I had been

pierced. Like some sort of biological specimen.

“You lot are quite interesting~. It really would be nice to study you~.”

The eyes that looked down on me were those of an innocent young girl. Dai-sensei raised her sword up to face-level. I couldn't feel any intent from her to attack me.

In an instant, Sera's flying kick ran into the sword. She had been able to sense Sera's movements and guarded against them. From Dai-sensei's standpoint, did Sera seem slow?

She was way too strong.

My palm seemed to be broken, but I didn't mind and drew my hand back, reattaching my leg and launched a low kick. Of course, that was also avoided. Dai-sensei's katana glowed red, and blew Sera and I away like scraps of paper.

“What did she just do?”

“I don't know.”

Sera and I looked at each other.

“She just used something called ‘Air’ or something. It's wind magic.”

Haruna explained the situation.

I took the chainsaw in my hands, and gathered my power.

If it came to this, I would store as much power as I could and use it all in an attack.

... 602... 703... 810.

At that point, Dai-sensei came charging at me, so I kicked off the gravel.

I felt like yelling out, but at the speed I was going at I felt like I was

on a roller coaster and couldn't let out a sound, so I silently crossed weapons with Dai-sensei.

Screeeeeeeech!! The chainsaw emitted a ruby-colored light and cut down on Dai-sensei's katana. Or rather, it was cutting into the deep crimson light surrounding her sword.

"Fwah, amazing! Such power in a masou shoujo is incredibly rare!"

In the midst of battle, Dai-sensei gave me high praise and showed me a smile.

My chainsaw suddenly cut through thin air, and I found Dai-sensei's katana at my throat.

"Ayumu-san, if you came and properly listened in my class, you could definitely become a top-class masou shoujo~."

Seeming satisfied, she chuckled. Well I'm beat... there's no way I could win against someone like this.

If it came to this, let me ignore Dai-sensei and go straight for Kyouko.

I gave the chainsaw a huge swing, and when I made Dai-sensei distance herself from me, I ran towards Kyouko. Having read my intentions, in the time it took me to make two steps towards Kyouko, Dai-sensei stood in front of her.

Fast. Way too fast. I couldn't do anything against that speed.

I brought the chainsaw I held in both hands down from up high, aiming to crush her. It was a swing that I had put all my strength into. If she dodged... well, I would actually prefer that.

Dai-sensei's smiling face vanished, replaced by the serious face of a warrior, and she caught my full-strength attack with her swords. The two katana surrounded by crimson light enveloped Dai-sensei, and waves reminiscent of the times when Haruna erected her barriers rippled in front of me.

Even so, my attack was heavier.

I could do this. I could beat her.... That's what I thought as I gathered even more power into my attack, but all the strength suddenly went out from my shoulders.

Kyouko had skewered both Dai-sensei and myself.

"That was quite a fun dance."

Kyouko's eyes were cold and thinned, and her voice sounded like it belonged to a man. Her eyes, which had lost their previous light and all their focus, gazed past myself and Dai-sensei, looking somewhere behind us.

"That's... how..."

The one who had spoken up was Yuu. The changed Kyouko was looking straight at Yuu.

Sera, Haruna, and I all looked at Yuu. Yuu, who usually kept her silent, emotionless mask up no matter what, was grasping her head with a frightened expression.

"Ahh, but it's good to see you're healthy. Don't look so frightened, Eucliwood. I don't intend to do anything."

The young man seemed to be enjoying himself, and his voice seemed to make the air around him tremble, causing a dark blue mist to settle in. When the mist touched me, my hairs stood on end and my body shivered at the disgusting feeling.

This person... was different. This wasn't Kyouko.

Was the person we were talking to now the *that person* who had given Kyouko the power of a vampire ninja and a Megalo?

The mist gently wrapped around Kyouko's body and lifted her up into the air.

"Well, then everyone. I look forward to our next meeting."

"... Ayumu-san was telling the truth, wasn't he? Tricking me is not allowed!"

Dai-sensei raised her voice while pressing on the part of her abdomen that had been impaled, but Kyouko didn't even give her a glance. Wrapped in the dark mist, she vanished almost like a Megalo would vanish into the wind after they died.

"I won't let you run away! Wait, please!"

Dai-sensei went chasing after Kyouko. I began to chase after them too, but Yuu had wrapped her arms around my waist, so I couldn't move.

As if I could let them run away! But when I tried to shake her off, I touched one of her gauntlets.

Yuu's hands were shaking.

And what's more, Haruna elbowed me in the back of the head.

"Aren't you amazing?! To think you could fight with Dai-sensei like that! This is good progress!"

She gave me a full-faced smile, almost as if she was talking about herself. I wasn't even a match for her though...

And then... Sera wrapped her arms around my neck. I felt a happy sensation on my cheeks. They were pressed up right against me!

"I can't walk very well right now. So I'll be using you for crutches."

Whatever happened to asking me first?

All in one go, I lost my will to chase after them. But for now...

"Yuu, what was that stuff earlier?"

How Yuu had reacted was weighing on my mind. I didn't try to shake her off, but gently placed a hand on one of her gauntlets.

She opened her eyes wide, and while she covered her mouth with both hands, she carved words into the gravel.

That was, that mist was, something I should have already

extinguished.

-

The power of a zombie.

Epilogue – I Don't Hate It





Part 1

Sitting on top of a gravestone as a refreshing breeze blew, I stuffed my cheeks with some onigiri I had bought from the convenience store.

Dai-sensei had ended up chasing after Kyouko. But, this time, she listened to what I had to say and believed me.

The serial murders that had occurred in this world seemed to be illegal even in Virie, so Dai-sensei had set off to look for and capture Kyouko. She also had promised to keep me updated about the situation.

Well, with this, the serial murders would stop, and the lonely, boring days I was spending in this world would return, I guess. If Virie was also looking for her, it's not like Kyouko could do anything too flashy.

Days where I placed peace and luxury above all.

To me, being able to sit here and stuff my cheeks with onigiri was supreme bliss.

Yes, before I met them... before I met Yuu... it was certainly like that.

But, what was this? There was just something missing from this situation.

I suddenly felt like going home quickly, and returning back to that noisy place.

Part 2

When I got home, the living room seemed lively. Oddly enough, it seemed that Haruna and Sera were arguing.

Geez... what was it now?

When I popped into the living room to see, I saw a huge pile of soap on the table.

“Why did you end up making soap when you were supposed to make pudding?!”

“I believe that there was something wrong with the ingredients you prepared for me!”

“Huh? I definitely properly matched all the ingredients to things from this world though! Just because the cooking was bad doesn’t mean the ingredients were!”

They pushed the blame on each other. They were like two fighting, little children.

I gave out a sigh of resignation.

“Why don’t we all just make it again together?”

“... Well, if Ayumu puts it like that...” Haruna pouted.

“That’s true. Let’s put what’s already happened behind us.” Sera completely changed her attitude.

“But, there’s no way pudding can become soap...”

Yuu glanced in our direction, but her expression was as emotionless as usual, a completely undisturbed surface of water.

“Alright, Ayumu! Let’s go and work nonstop all night and make some pudding!”

Haruna grabbed me by the hand, and began to take large steps forwards.

I'll pass on the nonstop all night part though...

"Alright, I'll go put the milk in some Karatsu pottery..."⁷⁹

Wait wait. Karatsu pottery? What exactly are you planning to do with the milk?

"Sera. Go heat up the bath and come back."

"Ayumu, exactly how much pudding are you planning on making?"

"Sorry, but for the sake of our cooking, I have to officially announce that you're not part of our battle strategy."

"What?! Not part of your battle...?!"

Sera glared at me, overreacting like a soccer player vigorously arguing against a referee for issuing a foul against him.

"Try to understand. Ayumu wants to cook alone with me!"

Haruna patted Sera on the shoulder. She's not wrong there, but I get the feeling that she was wrong about something...

"Haruna, let's get to it. Come on, let's go."

I squeezed Haruna's hand back, and headed for the kitchen.

At some point, Sera and Yuu had also come into the kitchen. I sighed once.

"Sera, go heat up the bath."

"... Fine!"

Her tone of voice almost reminded me of a pouting child, and was not a tone I would expect to come out of her.

"Don't worry, I'll definitely figure out something here for you to do."

I called out to Sera's retreating back, and she turned just her head around.

"Thanks," she said, her thorn-filled words flying through the air and piercing through me. Like that, she quickly left the kitchen.

... Now that I look at it, was Sera the kind of person to let her emotions show out in the open like that? Maybe she had opened her heart a little as well.

"You know, she always has a stern expression on, but when she's cooking she really seems to have fun. What she ends up making is definitely not food though."

"So, you wanna let her cook?"

"Deeeeeeeefinitely not."

"I feel the same way."

Haruna and I opened our mouths wide and laughed together.

Tap tap. I heard a tapping sound, and looked towards the sink. In there was one of Yuu's memos, and on the memo the following was written:

Ayumu. The pudding? = "Oniichan, hurry up and make the pudding, please?"

Ah, yes. I've never made pudding before, but if I left it to Haruna we'd probably be able to whip something up.

... Hm, now that I think about it, I wonder if Yuu could cook?

"Yuu, do you know how to make pudding?"

First, put the milk in some Karatsu pottery.

I unconsciously held my head in my hands.

"Yuu, you can be in charge of the tableware then."

Her silver hair waved, and she slowly nodded.

Part 3

Haruna's ahoge danced a samba as she cooked, and taken in by her incredible charm, I became distracted from the tasks she had assigned me to do.

"Agh, dammit! I told you not to whip it, didn't I?!"

"Sorry."

Up to this point, I would have never desired this kind of everyday life, but now that had changed.

I wanted to hold this life precious forevermore. That's how I thought about it.

In the space of this week, many things had happened.

Haruna had appeared, we had been attacked by Megalo, Sera had appeared, we had been attacked by Megalo, we had been attacked by Megalo, Megalo had appeared, Kyouko had...

Hadn't I been attacked by one too many Megalo?

Megalo were the enemy of masou shoujo. I was a zombie and a masou shoujo, so I think it was unavoidable that I would be attacked. Not that I wouldn't mind getting attacked less.⁸⁰

Even so, weren't the Megalo coming a bit too often? Granted, if they were coming because Yuu was showing emotion, then I would take them all on. If that's what it would take to ensure these days could continue.

"So, why exactly did you suddenly decide to make pudding?"

Haruna's ahoge jumped back and forth. She was clearly in a good mood.

"Rejoice, Ayumu! We've been selected for a Megalo extermination

operation!”

“... But you can’t even transform yet.”

“Not me! Ayumu’s doing it!”

Why is she completely ignoring what I have to say? Also, where exactly are we going to be doing this? Don’t tell me we would be going to a different world?

“There are a looooot of masou shoujo and Megalo gathered in this world! Ahh, how exhilarating!”

She opened both her arms wide, and spun around, looking pleased. As I expected, this world was going to get involved in something unpleasant again. Hey, wait just a second. Didn’t that mean... that we would be waging war?

I know I’ve said so many times that I would take on all the Megalo, but now I wanted to take that all back.

When I looked towards Yuu, I saw a somewhat lonely-looking expression on her face. If we exterminated all the Megalo, what would happen to the underworld, where Yuu came from? Yuu was probably worried about that.

“Ugh, I’m really not suited for this kind of task. Yuu, sorry, but switch with me.”

When I half-forcibly pushed the task on her, Yuu nodded once and willingly switched with me. Yuu was more skilled at the task than I had expected, and I suddenly found myself left without something to do.

I see, so she could properly do things she was told to do.

Haruna and Yuu looked almost like sisters, cooking together like that. At the terribly charming scene, I felt my jaw slacken.

The puddings were put into the oven, and Yuu came over to me silently. Haruna watched the oven intently as her ahoge bounced around.

Yuu had on her usual emotionless expression, but to me she seemed like she was having fun.

Haruna seemed to be pleased with this type of lifestyle. I also couldn't help but be pleased with it. Sera also seemed to have opened up a bit.

But, what about Yuu? Could she be properly enjoying herself? She couldn't ever show emotion, and couldn't ever put what she held dearest into words.

"Hey, Yuu. What do you think about this way of living?"

I didn't really expect an answer from her, but...

Tap tap. When I looked down, what was written there was...

-

I don't hate it.

-

That was written... ahah, and I was completely worrying for nothing.

But, I felt like there was still something I was forgetting here... something I forgot to ask...

Ah.

"Hey, Haruna. It turned out you had nothing to do with the serial murders this time. But what exactly was up with what you said back then?"

"What?"

"When you said things like 'If you're a zombie, you wouldn't die even if you were stabbed,' or 'ninjas can disappear or reappear.'"

"Ahh, that. I already figured it out, so I'm not too interested anymore, but... I mean, the wizards in this world can teleport and

heal themselves without even using magic. So I was always wondering what type of strange magic this was, but I figured out that it was because they were making people in this world into the undead and into ninjas. Heh, someone like me can understand that much simply just by thinking about it for a bit.”

... Were there seriously wizards in this world?

Probably, she’s talking about magicians.

Stab me to death... oh, could she be talking about illusionist magic?! And the appearing and disappearing was that too!

What a fool I was for being thrown for a loop by Haruna’s words, even if only for a bit. That makes sense... There’s no reason Haruna would have any interest in the affairs of this world.

... For some reason, that annoyed me.

“Hey, Haruna. Speaking of that stabbing magic... there are gaps they stab them through, you know.”

“Eh? Aren’t they just healing where they get stabbed?”

“The disappearing and reappearing too, that’s just them moving normally through open spaces behind or underneath them. They’re not using magic or any kind of special types of humans in any of that.”

“Wha-?!”

Haruna opened her eyes wide and her mouth hung open. That seemed to be quite a shocking announcement to her. She had really believed that there were wizards in this world.

“Could it be you seriously believed what you believed? Even though it’s pretty obvious if you just think about it for a bit, you’re really just an idiot, aren’t you?”

“U.... I... I was... tricked!!”

Hey, you! Put down that kitchen knife! Hold on! Where the hell are

you planning to stick that?! It's not like I'm the one who tri-

Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!!!

Afterword

Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh!!

This book finally went out!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Hello everyone, nice to meet you. This is Kimura.

-

This work is a revision of my work that received an honorable mention in the 20th Fantasia Novel Competition.

It's really a dream to be able to put out a book.

Thank you to all of you who have chosen my book.

-

Now then, the truth is, I had no idea what this thing called a “plot” was.

I was called by my supervisor...

“Does your book have a plot?” I was asked.

... What? I was really puzzled.

Have you all heard of this word “plot”? Because I hadn't at all.

“A plot carries the design specifications for the work. We'll need to do revisions so let's make a plot.”

“I've never made one before.”

For some reason, I remember that my response was just brimming with confidence.

And then, as a first step to making this plot, we started first to talk

about what the subject of the book was.

“First, what’s the genre of ‘Kore wa Zombie’?”

“Ah. It’s Sci-fi action!”

“... Please apologize to all the Sci-fi authors.”

Sci-fi authors, I’m really really sorry.

“So, what’s the genre of ‘Kore wa Zombie’ then?”

“Ah. It’s suspense action!”

“It’s a romantic comedy, isn’t it?”

“No, it’s horror action at least, isn’t it?”

“... It’s a romantic comedy.”

“Eh? It’s a superpower ac-“

“Romantic comedy.”

“It’s a romantic comedy, isn’t it?”

-

This work is a romantic comedy.

-

The protagonist Aikawa Ayumu gets involved in certain incidents and dies.

But at that time, he meets a girl and is revived as a zombie. (There’s action too!)

And that’s not all. (There’s horror too!)

New girls begin appearing in front of the protagonist after he becomes a zombie! (Animals come out too!)

Ayumu finds himself surrounded by girls and leads a carefree life. (There's suspense too!)

These three unique girls are then interwoven into this boisterous romantic comedy! (There are superpowered battles too!)

And in front of Ayumu and company, villains finally appear! (There are swordfights too!)

-

Well, if I do follow the outline like this, it's pretty obvious that this is a romantic comedy.

To be honest, I was the absolute happiest when I was writing Sera's battle scene. A long time ago, I wanted to become a master at fighting with two swords, so completely unconsciously, all the sword-wielding characters ended up having two swords.

If I write the battle scenes better, this work would become a "romantic action" or an "action romance," wouldn't it?

By the way, the illustrations were wonderful. The biggest selling point of this book were the illustrations.

Because the illustrations were so cute, I remember that I had a lot of fun with both the battle scenes and the romantic comedy portions.

So I guess at this point, it's safe to say that this work is pretty much a romantic comedy.

But, just maybe... it's an actio-

"No, it's a romantic comedy."

-

Oh right, when I was writing the manuscript I was thinking about this.

Girls (at least, to guys) take up both money and time. Girls are

worth that money and time. And to increase that worth, there's makeup and clothes.

The biggest motivation for us to find love lies in the girl's cuteness and beauty, right? But, without a good heart, the relationship wouldn't last for very long... I think.

-

Couldn't you say that about books like this as well?

Even though there are cute illustrations, if the heart of the book isn't good, I don't think the readers would continue reading.

I hope that everyone who took the time to obtain and read this book laughed, smiled, and want to be with it for a long time... hm? These types of thoughts... sort of make the book a romantic comedy, right? Could it be that in my heart I think of it as a romantic comedy?

"It's a romantic comedy."

-

Lastly, towards all the people who obtained a copy of this book, to all the people who read the drafts, to the members of the selection committee, to the illustrators Kobuichi-san and Muririn-san. And to my supervising editor Morioka-san.

To all of these people, I extend my deepest gratitude from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you.

- December 2008, Kimura Shinichi

Commentary

Fantasia Books Editorial Department

... This... this book is so damn absurd!

That was my first impression when I encountered this novel. I guess it's a trend nowadays to have an idiot protagonist who dies but is then revived.

-

Approximately one year ago, I had just transferred to the Fujimi bookstore, and was on the edge of my seat waiting for the results of the 20th Fantasia Competition. The prize has a twenty year history, and I wondered what kind of wonderful work would be added to the roster this year!

The works that had passed three rounds of screenings had been listed and pasted to the wall of the editorial department.

Among those works, one that stood out to me immediately like a sore thumb was “Kore wa Zombie Desu ka?” (Another work also had a title that had a weird aura emanating from it, and eventually became the runner-up in the competition. For all of you who want to submit work in the future, keep in mind that the title is an important thing!)

Nervously, I looked at that title... well, this was the first time I had read this word “Zombie,” so I immediately went “what the hell is this?” with wrinkles forming across my brow. So I read it, occasionally bursting out into laughter, and finally was filled with the impression that I gave at the beginning of this commentary. What the hell was this? People who actually liked zombies would just get angry at this, wouldn't they?

I can just picture the young, reckless author going “Let's get this work added into the relatively orthodox (just this editor's opinion)

line of Fantasia Light Novels!” and excitedly sending the work into us... What the hell, that’s insane!! Although that was what I was thinking, considering I’m the type of person who can’t bring myself to hate strange things and have a liking for the bizarre, I already had decided in my heart to endorse this work. The other editors with better sense can endorse the more orthodox works, so this is fine, right?

-

This is just a pet theory of mine, but there are two types of books where “absurdity” is a selling point. There’s the type where the author is incredibly bright and deliberately writes an “absurd” story. Then, there are the completely airheaded authors who end up writing an airheaded “absurd” story. No matter how I look at it, this work is in the latter category (my apologies). I’m probably more like the people in the second category anyways, so I can sympathize.

By the way, just like when it comes to big or tiny breasts, the question of which is superior doesn’t actually exist. No matter what, it’s just an absurd story. Yes, absurd stories don’t have a hierarchy! Either one is fine as long as it’s interesting.

-

As all this was happening, “Have you read ‘Zombie?’” became an active topic of discussion in our editorial department, and at a later selection meeting in our department there were both approving and dissenting opinions. I wondered what would happen to it, but in the end, the minority of us who liked unconventional things enthusiastically endorsed it, with a “there are a lot of problems with this, but above all, all the characters were enjoyably depicted!” and it managed to hang on until the last round, even getting an honorable mention! To think it could actually get a prize... Luck is just as important as everything else, isn’t it?

-

Looking back on that selection meeting, there wasn’t a very positive impression when it came to this work that was a bit lacking in both

organization and writing style. However, a certain sensei smiled and said “I really like this. If it was published, we can make the title something like ‘No, it’s Kefir,’⁸¹ except something like ‘Kore wa Zombie Desu ka? No, it’s a mahou shoujo,’ or something...” His opinion really worked its way into my heart... or you could say my eyes had been opened.

At that time, I became certain. If thinking a work was interesting meant believing that the readers would definitely have fun reading it, editors (the supporting side) can’t just shirk away. Instead, we should think more freely, and through that we can bring even more interesting works to the world.

For that reason, after the selection meeting, I asked our editorial department chief to assign me to this project. Ahh, and I’m really glad that I got the job.

-

The author Kimura Shinichi and the bishoujo unit illustrators Kobuichi-sensei and Muririn-sensei did a wonderful job with the serialization of this series.

Leaving the refreshing nature of the work I had felt during the competition intact, by revising and attaching some truly charming visuals, they managed to double the enjoyability and flow of the work, don’t you think? I have much confidence in the author’s carefree writing style and the wonderful matching illustrations.

I think that light novels are the products of teamwork. Please enjoy this product of the collaboration of three young, vigorous individuals.

They are aiming to bring more great works to their readers right now, so I hope that all the readers will give their support to Kimura Shinichi and Team Zombie! I am also waiting with all my heart to hear encouraging news from them.

Project Leader and Translator : NanoDesu

Supervisor : Whitesora

Editor : KH.hayate, Einander

Typesetter : DaigakuOtaku

Special Mention: Narshodan

Translation Group : NanoDesu Translations

1 A play on the words “mahou shoujo.” “Sou” is written with the kanji that means “clothes,” so “masou shoujo” means pretty much “magical clothing girl.”

2 He actually says “I’ll eat you.” Nooooo a threat that works very well in English.

3 Rice ball.

4 This is the Japanese equivalent expression to the English “raining cats and dogs.” But I couldn’t use the English expression because then the joke here wouldn’t work.

5 Around 4 feet 9 inches. Metric system rules!!

6 Translates vaguely to “magical clothing tempered weapon.” Or something.

7 Character in Kinnikuman, who has a special ability called the “Palo Special.” Now that I think about it, if you’re following my Oreimo translation, I feel that there was a reference to the same exact special ability to the same exact show... weird.

8 Pun on Keroro Gunsou. I’m going to warn you that I’m probably bad at translating puns and might miss a few here and there.

9 Refers to a card game I believe, in which you have to match stanzas of poetry as fast as possible.

10 A Japanese idiom. Basically, expresses shock at bad behavior of a youngster. Sort of like “what must his/her parents be like?”

11 Croatian heavyweight kickboxer.

12 Hiken, Tsubame Gaeshi is a sword technique.

13 Literally, “it felt like the universe might come out of my mouth.”

14 The correct idiom is actually “even demons can cry.”

15 He refers to the rice as “Japanese person’s soul,” and for the life

of me I could not figure out a way to translate this without it sounding terribly awkward.

16 “Her name is Kirino.” Ok sorry, when you do multiple projects simultaneously the wires sometimes get crossed and manifest in silly ways =p.

17 Terrible transition. You suck.

18 Ultraman reference.

19 1 tsubo is equal to around 3.3 square meters.

20 I don't know if Steven Segal should be honored here or terrified. Maybe a mixture of both?

21 I'm inclined to say this is a reference to the Studio Ghibli, but it might be a mythology reference I'm not getting.

22 Some gymnastics stuff. If you're actually that curious, look it up.

23 A Japanese variation of tag. I'm not too keen on the details, but presumably there are freeze tag elements in this game (or else this reference would make no sense).

24 A lot of times, it is probably more fluid to write a gender pronoun like “him” or “her,” but these pronouns do not exist in Japanese, and because Ayumu doesn't really know the gender of the killer yet I will try hard to keep this gender ambiguous even at the cost of fluidity.

25 Pun pun pun. Haruna calls Yuu a “nekura mancer,” which is an obvious play on words of “necromancer.” But “nekura” also means “gloomy” in Japanese.

26 Martial arts tournament held in Japan.

27 He literally says something like “there is no moe that exceeds ponytail moe.”

28 Dono is a pretty respectful honorific.

29 Hachiren translates roughly to “continuous eight” or “connected eight” something.

30 A pun is going on here. “Words” in Japanese is “kotoba” or “koto no ha,” which translates literally into “statements of leaves.” Hence the pun.

31 The actual word here is “guts pose.” Feel free to look it up.

32 The measure he gives is 1830 meters.

33 Super Sentai and Ultraman references, respectively. Ultraman can only exist on earth for 3 minutes. Or something. Don’t look at me. I’m not translating Zombie because I love Ultraman or something.

34 Onomatopoeia is hard people. Give me a break.

35 Ayumu is a licensed professional. Do not try this at home.

36 She actually screams back “obviously!” but I didn’t think that conveyed the urgency of the situation.

37 Obviously a play on Muhammad Ali. Anteater in Japanese is “Arikui.”

38 Something here that is sort of impossible to translate. He goes “Jabujabujabujabu... it wasn’t the sound of water. They were punches.” Jabujabujabujabu is the onomatopoeia for splashing water.

39 If this turns into Naruto I’m abandoning ship. Not before burning the ship. Crew and all.

40 Hundred Demon Slow Death? Or something.

41 Cute.

42 Ryuubi translates to “Dragon Tail.”

43 Both references to the Coliseum.

- 44 Funny story, when I was first typing this word I somehow typo'd it as "shit." Pretty interesting coincidence.
- 45 Literally, "Even though I didn't make much I felt as if I were buying a house."
- 46 Mexican masked wrestler.
- 47 Japanese masked wrestler.
- 48 I translated "guts pose" to something else when it came up earlier in this volume, but screw it. I'll just link to a picture. [Imagine this, but less... sumo-ey.](#)
- 49 I believe this was a general in Ancient China.
- 50 Google claims that Oberstein is a character from Legend of Galactic Heroes, and one of his nicknames is Dry Ice Sword (Doraiaisu no Ken).
- 51 Mixed martial arts tournament.
- 52 More literally, "she nodded like she was hanging her head."
- 53 This might be a reference to a prediction made by Nostradamus.
- 54 Cat ears, but words I expect most readers to know so I will leave them untranslated.
- 55 A Gundam reference. Crossbone Vanguard is apparently a team in Gundam or something. Whatever. These references...
- 56 Basically, something something Crossbone Vanguard something blahblah some other shit I don't care about something something. Understood?
- 57 Wrestling move. Feel free to youtube it.
- 58 For those who don't know, this is the Japanese equivalent to "meow."
- 59 Not sure I'm correctly "Englishifying" this from the katakana

(Arufureddo Ganaason). Going from English to katakana and back again wasn't really high on my priority list of learning Japanese. It's a pretty useless skill in the long run.

60 I'm pretty sure most people know what this means, but it's a polite thing to do before you start eating a meal in Japan. Except it happens more in anime than it does in real life... when I was in Japan I honestly don't recall more than once or twice I actually saw other people saying this.

61 Kyoufu means fear or dread.

62 "I forgot?" "No, Yuu forgot!" "But I didn't forget anything." "No, Yuu forgot!" "Grrrr...." Alright, this was a stupid author's note.

63 Literally, "punched me like a cat." I'm not really familiar with how a cat punches. [Enjoy this live demonstration.](#)

64 This is tofu. I think the Kyou means it's tofu made in Kyoto or something.

65 The full name of Tokyo is Tokyo Metropolis, or Tokyo-to. Take the first syllable away, and you have the exact kanji for Kyoto.

66 A symbol of a serpent eating its own tail. [Wiki to the rescue.](#)

67 The word she used here was youkai, which is borderline common enough that I could probably get away with not translating it, but oh well.

68 This might be a slightly altered reference to Japanet, which is apparently a real thing. [Here.](#)

69 Hm, so Hiken means "Secret Sword Technique" basically, and I haven't really been translating it up to this point since I thought it sounded snazzier in Japanese. But I guess you need to understand the translation to appreciate the exchange here.

70 Roughly, Crane's blessing.

71 Kaeshi or gaeshi means "return," and can be used in the context of "returning a favor." Ongaeshi actually does mean something like

“returning a favor.”

72 Chabudai is just the word for dining table (what?). Ether is ether. This is also apparently a reference to Super Robot Wars. Wut.

73 If I fail at descriptions of clothes every now and then, it's not because I'm bad at Japanese. It's because I'm a guy. So shut up.

74 There is some reference here to the Praying Mantis style of martial arts.

75 The last word she uses here, “asobinin,” which translates literally to “person who plays,” does carry connotations of being sexually loose, but it is used that way more when it is used to refer to men.

76 Literally, “don't be so conceited.”

77 Here's where the vastly different word ordering in English and Japanese comes into play. The dog's words ended on something like “This world...” and Ayumu completes it as “Was not of this world.” But if you want to follow Japanese word ordering, a better translation would be “this world of which she is not.”

78 He actually uses an idiom here. “Excessive loveliness becomes hatred hundredfold.” Not really easy to massage into an adjective.

79 Some type of pottery in Japan. [Wiki to the rescue.](#)

80 Literally, “I would be willing to compromise there.”

81 Some meme that might have originated from a commercial and might have been popularized by a Touhou song or something. I'm not too sure.